



THE CONSCIENCE OF
THE NEWSPAPER

THE CONSCIENCE OF THE NEWSPAPER

A CASE BOOK IN THE PRINCIPLES
AND PROBLEMS OF JOURNALISM

BY

LEON NELSON FLINT

PROFESSOR OF JOURNALISM IN THE
UNIVERSITY OF KANSAS; AUTHOR
OF "THE EDITORIAL," ETC.



D. APPLETON AND COMPANY
NEW YORK :: 1925 :: LONDON

THE CONSCIENCE OF
THE NEWSPAPER
A CASE FOR THE PRESS
AND FREEDOM OF THE JOURNALIST
BY
LEWIS MURDOCK BELL
WITH AN INTRODUCTION BY
JAMES M. COHEN
Copyright, 1925, by
D. APPLETON AND COMPANY

PRINTED IN THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

PREFACE

When the principles of fairness, independence, accuracy, service, and the rest, are presented to the inexperienced man entering journalism he has no hesitancy in accepting them. But as abstractions such virtues are almost meaningless. When the same man meets his first concrete problem in suppression of news, or correction of error, or printing news of anti-social acts, or fair play for the opposition, or injecting editorial color into the news, or distortion by selection and emphasis—when he actually faces the fact rather than the theory, his former view of abstract principle may seem to him childishly naïve. What in the abstract appeared simple is now complex; what appeared easy is now hard. What shall he do? Temporize, compromise, muddle through. It is the best he can do. If his average standard of guesswork is high, he wins and deserves success. But he would, perhaps, have been much profited by consideration of concrete cases before he reached the hour of his first decisions on conduct or policy as a journalist.

Those who study law do so by the case method. Those who study business in the modern way do so by the problem or case method. Those who are interested in anything more than the "tricks" of journalism may profitably employ the problem method of research. It is realistic and authoritative.

Any discussion of journalism that gives due regard to criticism has its negative aspect, but is justified by the presence of a constructive purpose. An account of journalism as it is, at its worst and at its best, can hardly fail to hold suggestions of what the journalism of the future is capable of becoming. Its present values are the first fruits of its larger possibilities.

Only in the broader sense is this a book on journalistic ethics, though even such a matter as the individuality of a

newspaper has its underlying ethical significance. It is rather an attempt to present American journalism as it is and as it seems destined to become if its finer possibilities are realized.

The first division of the book, "Newspaper Practice and the Editor's Conscience," approaches each editorial problem from various angles, illustrated by the "cases" offered; it is a symposium on matters of newspaper conduct, with such comment as the author feels justified in making. The aim has been to go to original sources for specific information about the world of editorial decisions in which the real character of our journalism takes its form.

Proceeding from these particulars to the more general, this survey considers, in its second division, "The Thing We Call Journalism," in respect to its nature and functions—its relations to the public.

In Part III, "The Newspaper of To-morrow," account is taken of those influences that seem to be shaping the future.

The writer of this study of the press—a teacher of journalism who has enjoyed some years of practical experience as editor and publisher, as well as opportunity for close observation of journalistic practice in many newspaper offices—may be expected to have acquired not only the first-hand knowledge requisite to any opinion but also a detachment to save him from a too dogmatic advocacy of this or that view, whatever may be his personal preferences. It is hoped that the discussions are sufficiently tolerant of all sincere beliefs held by journalists in the two newspaper fields, country and city.

Some overlapping of topics will occur under any grouping of the problems of journalism. There is a measure of truth in the saying that the ethics of journalism is all comprehended in the one question, what to print and what not to print. But a certain amount of differentiation seems necessary. The fact that suppression of news, for example, considered first as a subject by itself, comes up again in the discussion of anti-social news and also in the chapter on independence, does not involve objectionable duplication since the points of view are different and the cases given are distinctive.

Data from which the cases were written came from newspaper offices in practically every state in the Union. Many of the facts were submitted with the understanding that their source should be held in confidence; hence few references are given to localities or men. Grateful acknowledgment is made for this invaluable assistance.

Portions of the chapter on, "The Influence of Codes and Professional Standards," are reprinted, by permission, from an article by the present writer in *Editor and Publisher*, New York. Quotations credited to Chester S. Lord are to be found in his, *The Young Man and Journalism*, copyright, the Macmillan Company, and are reprinted by permission both of the publishers of the book and of the *Saturday Evening Post*, in which they originally appeared. Quotations from James Bryce are from his *Modern Democracies*, copyright, the Macmillan Company, and are reprinted by permission. Several quotations from bulletins published by the department of journalism in the University of Kansas are also to be found in *The Coming Newspaper*, published by Henry Holt and Company, New York.

L. N. F.

CONTENTS

PREFACE	PAGE V
-------------------	-----------

PART I

NEWSPAPER PRACTICE AND THE EDITOR'S CONSCIENCE

CHAPTER	
I. GENERAL SURVEY OF CRITICISMS OF THE PRESS . .	3
II. FACT IN THE NEWS—AND FICTION	12
III. TRUTH AND ITS ENEMIES, DISTORTION AND "COLOR" . .	50
IV. THE RIGHT AND WRONG OF SUPPRESSION	71
V. OPPORTUNITIES FOR INDEPENDENCE AND COURAGE .	101
VI. THE STRUGGLE FOR IMPARTIALITY AND FAIRNESS . .	152
VII. HANDLING THE NEWS OF ANTI-SOCIAL ACTS . . .	187
VIII. SOME BUSINESS-ETHICAL PROBLEMS	244

PART II

THE THING WE CALL JOURNALISM

IX. THE NATURE AND FUNCTIONS OF JOURNALISM . .	257
X. TRADITIONS AND TENDENCIES IN JOURNALISM . .	283
XI. NEWSPAPER INDIVIDUALITY AND POLICIES	311
XII. NEWSPAPER INFLUENCE, ITS ORIGINS AND OBJECTIVES	326
XIII. PROFESSIONAL OBLIGATIONS TO THE COMMUNITY .	365

PART III

THE NEWSPAPER OF TO-MORROW

XIV. THE INFLUENCE OF CODES AND PROFESSIONAL STAND- ARDS	385
XV. THE INFLUENCE OF LAW	395
XVI. INFLUENCE OF PROFESSIONAL TRAINING	407
XVII. OTHER MEANS OF IMPROVEMENTS	418

APPENDIX

	PAGE
SOME CODES OF ETHICS FOR JOURNALISM	427
INDEX	463

PART I

NEWSPAPER PRACTICE AND
THE EDITOR'S CONSCIENCE

THE CONSCIENCE OF THE NEWSPAPER

CHAPTER I

GENERAL SURVEY OF CRITICISMS OF THE PRESS

Those who write and edit and publish newspapers have a habit of repelling criticism with the remark—made in a tone of resignation, irony, or indignation, as temperament dictates—“Oh yes, everybody thinks he knows how to run a newspaper!”

The answer is not adequate, because it is not true. It does not get at the root of the matter. Most people regard the press with a fair amount of respect. They entertain for it a remnant of that awe which in earlier days enveloped the “mystery” of printing. They are not unmindful of its services to them and to society. They do not think that they could achieve the ideal in newspaper making.

But a good many people detect what seem to them remediable imperfections in the newspapers they read. They feel free to point these out from time to time, and this criticism, in the aggregate, assumes rather large proportions. Some of it, of course, is entitled to small consideration. Either it is void of any comprehension of the difficulties that attend the making of a newspaper; or it proceeds from an utter misconception of the functions of journalism; or it is inspired by self-interest. Hence it is not surprising that many newspaper men take an antagonistic attitude towards all criticism. It is not surprising, but it is unfortunate.

Everybody needs criticism, and the wise profit by it. Self-criticism is healthful, but it is likely to be colored by self-justification—rationalization, as the psychologists call it. If the

taste of it is too bitter, the sugar bowl is handy. So the dose handed to us by the critical public is more likely to meet our human needs. It should be swallowed without too wry a face. If it does no good, the chances are we did not have the ailment for which it was prescribed. No harm has been done, broadly speaking, except the waste of the medicine, since our distaste for ingestion is balanced by the public's delight in administering the corrective.

So the better policy for the journalist seems to be to welcome criticism, to weigh it, and to give his opinion as to its merits. This procedure leads to better understanding. Disregard of criticism appeals to some as an admission of guilt and to others as an insult added to an injury. Advertisement of a newspaper's purposes, with a frank setting-forth of the magnitude of its tasks, is bound to lead to greater appreciation and fairness.

Sources of Criticism

Naturally, the imperfections in journalism pointed out by men and women within the profession itself are to be regarded most seriously. And they are by no means few. The types of newspapers are distinct enough to enable the producers of one type to see the faults in the others. And these critics within the profession are not slow to point out imperfections, in private and in public, orally and in writing, individually and by group resolution. The source of such criticism lends to it the authority of expert opinion.

Next in importance is the judgment of those outside of journalism who, by reason of their special studies in the social sciences or in political science, or by reason of their experience in life, have arrived at a broad view of journalism in its relations to the well-being of people in the mass. Their indictments are sometimes caustic in tone, and their plans for betterment are often so impractical as to be ludicrous; but they have the advantage of occupying a position of detachment and of being without any selfish interest in the matter.

Perhaps we should place next in order of significance the strictures uttered by vocational groups or by group leaders, for example, in the field of labor organization. Self-interest is

doubtless keenly alive here, but the proportion of the public represented in the group is so large as to command respect.

Lastly, we may lump together all such charges and imputations as arise sporadically from offended politicians, disgruntled persons of this or that persuasion, those whose toes have been trampled on by the press, and various brands of dreamers who take little account of the world as it is. Patent self-interest renders the weight of this criticism negligible, as does also the presentation of a purely idealistic point of view. The press is not to be wholly separated from the people. It must keep well ahead, if it would exercise leadership, but not too far ahead. Even the pillar of cloud and the pillar of fire had to be within sight of the multitude in order to guide them. And the press does not quite fit into that figure, for it is a part of our daily lives, not a sign in the skies. It is with us, not beyond us. Our lives go into it and its life is absorbed in ours. As some one has said, "it gives back as rain what it has received as mist." Journalism will do its part of the world's work if it manages to be as good as the people are at their best.

That journalism is abundantly supplied with criticism is a tribute to its essential character. In a sense, the newspaper is everybody's business. Constructive and disinterested criticism of the press is everybody's duty.

Main Currents of Criticism

Journalistic usages and policies, regarding which differences of opinion give rise to criticism, have to do with the manifold relationships of the press—relations with society as a whole, with one particular community, with the readers of the paper, with advertisers, with political or other groups, with individuals. It would satisfy the requirements of logical procedure to examine, in order, the newspaper's discharge of its obligations in each of these directions. But in as much as some of the most serious complaints, like those uttered against news suppression, have to do with several or all of the relationships, it seems desirable to seek a grouping of criticism affording clearer differentiation.

At first glance this requirement seems to be met by consider-

ing separately each of the main steps in newspaper production—the business activities by which a newspaper is financed, the gathering of the news, the process of selection, the presentation of the news, interpretation of the news, influence and service. Or by thinking of the newspaper successively as an informer, an interpreter, a persuader, an entertainer, a business institution. Or by regarding in turn such storm centers in newspaperdom as the publisher, the business manager, the managing editor, the editor-in-chief, the city editor, the telegraph editor, the reporter. Or by looking first at the dominating spirit of journalism, then at its declared purposes, then at the raw materials it utilizes, then at its methods or technique.

Each of these bases of analysis has advantages. But in a brief summarization of the shortcomings of journalism as seen by its critics, we shall, perhaps, be aided most by calling to mind those virtues which journalists themselves have emphasized, in public utterances, in their papers, and in their group codes of ethics—calling them to mind in connection with the expressed doubts as to their having been realized in newspaper practice.

If a journalist is to count for something in upbuilding his profession he must know it as it is—know the best that is claimed for it and also know the worst that is charged against it. In the words of a wise teacher, "When we see the good clearly, we needs must choose it."

The Major Virtues in Journalism

There is not, to be sure, a special set of moral laws for the journalist. He is a man like other men and one moral law is over all. But the nature of his calling puts to him a particular set of tests differing in some respects from the tests he would meet in another vocation. Truthfulness is universally a virtue, with such exceptions as a seemingly higher law sanctions, but the consequences of untruth in a newspaper are multiplied many-fold. Then, too, the temptations to untruth come to the journalist in different guise from that in which they come, say, to a physician. Essentially they are the same, but their forms differ. Just as there are many canons based on the one moral

law, so each canon has many aspects which stand revealed when application of principles to practice is attempted.

What, then, are the virtues that journalism tries to practice and in what respects is it accused of falling short of its professed aims?

Accuracy, Thoroughness, Comprehensiveness

These are among the fundamental excellencies recognized by all journalists.

Criticisms.—Some of the complaints with respect to the realization of these aims in practice are: an almost criminal carelessness; misquotation of persons interviewed; deliberate faking; slovenliness in writing; improper sacrifices to speed; failure to carry through to its conclusion a continuing news story; obliviousness to significant news in more remote fields.

Truthfulness

The broad requirement that not even facts be allowed to give a false impression.

Criticisms.—That much truth to which the public is entitled is suppressed; that news is distorted; that it is colored with editorial opinion; that by selection and emphasis it is made to conform to the newspaper's bias; that newspapers practice deceit; that they are chauvinistic; that they distribute the poison of propaganda.

Independence, Courage

Newspapers are jealous of their freedom from social restraint. The public expects them to maintain equal freedom from other kinds of coercion, and to manifest courage in asserting such independence.

Criticisms.—That commercialism has dulled the newspaper's interest in higher things; that impersonal journalism lacks courage; that the institutional press is bound by capitalistic sympathies; that some newspapers are virtually subsidized; that advertising is the means of keeping the newspapers "good"; that they avoid "dangerous" topics; that they do not defend

the weak; that they wink at some forms of law violation; that fear of "higher powers" renders them illiberal.

Impartiality, Fairness, Justice

Journalism recognizes that as an organ of democracy it has a vital function.

Criticisms.—That the press is unfairly partisan in politics and in other matters; that it maintains a "black list"; that it worships certain "sacred cows"; that it will not try to right a wrong it has committed; that it ruthlessly attacks the defenseless; that it is a "clubber"; that in crusading it seeks a victim and handles him brutally; that it has an inflexibility inconsistent with justice; that its methods are such that its support often kills good causes.

Decency, Constructiveness

The shameless flaunting of indecency by yellow journalism was a passing phase, and the press declares it has constructive purposes in printing the news of antisocial acts.

Criticisms.—That some newspapers invade privacy; that they present a dark picture of the world; that they are virtually textbooks on crime; that scandal and "sex stories" are printed solely to sell papers; that some newspapers employ conscienceless reporters; that they spread vulgarity before the eyes of the young; that they exercise no constructive leadership.

Sincerity, Honesty, Honor

Newspapers assert that they despise hypocrisy and that the motives for their acts are always higher than the selfish interests of owner or employee.

Criticisms.—That the atmosphere of a newspaper office is tainted by duplicity; that newspapers maintain a ridiculous pose of infallibility; that they print what they do not believe; that reporters and editors and publishers are venal; that they use their power to gain favors; that they steal photographs; that a newspaper is not a "gentleman"; that it "bleeds" candidates for office; that it is tricky in using subterfuge to betray confi-

dences; that it uses progressivism to get rich and then becomes reactionary; that it has deteriorated sadly since the days of the "giants" in journalism; that newspaper "enterprise" stops at nothing.

Responsibility, Trustworthiness

The newspaper recognizes that along with its privileges and its power go equal responsibilities.

Criticisms.—That the newspaper employs anonymity to evade personal responsibility; that it takes no thought as to the social consequences of the ideas and suggestions it puts into readers' minds; that it does not perform its duties as a common carrier of information; that it fails in meeting its obligations to preserve peace in its community, to maintain respect for law, to discourage race and class antagonisms, and to help wipe out sectionalism; that good journalism protects bad journalism.

Optimism, Progressiveness

Journalism asserts its belief in progress and its hope of a better world.

Criticisms.—That journalism's daily picture of the world runs from gray to black; that a visitor from Saturn reading an American newspaper would get the impression that most human beings are bad; that the newspaper is suspicious of anything new in government and hidebound in its conservatism; that distrust of American institutions is the first lesson the immigrant learns from the press; that the advancement of science is presented to newspaper readers only in distorted form because of the ignorance of journalists.

Mercy, Kindness, Consideration

Newspapers represent themselves as the friends of the weak and of the unorganized masses of people.

Criticisms.—That only in case the story is of minor importance is mercy shown to any individual; that innocent persons are made to suffer needlessly by publicity; that cruel conditions in industry are ignored by the press except when no advertis-

ing contract is involved; that humanitarianism is only a journalistic pose; that a newspaper is far less considerate than are the individuals on the staff.

Moderation, Proportion, Deliberation

Journalism professes to hold to a proper scale of values and to use due care in exercising sanity and caution.

Criticisms.—That sensationalism distorts the news in most papers; that the significance of news is less regarded than its human interest; that trivialities are allowed to crowd out important information in the fields of business, education, religion, and art; that newspapers trifle with the mob spirit; that they offer snap judgments in the guise of deliberate conclusions.

Unselfishness, Service to the Public

Practically all of the rural press and a large proportion of the city press make much of their value to the community as promoters of every good work.

Criticisms.—That the real interest of the press is money-grubbing; that its advocacy of improvements is limited to those favored by the commercial interests; that it does not actually take the lead in worthy movements but follows where it is led; that few editors have any professional ideals but are actuated solely by selfishness.

Attractiveness and Good Manners

Critics from abroad have remarked a lack of order and logical presentation of matter in American newspapers; lack of literary care in editing; too great length of articles; want of discretion and lack of education on the part of American reporters; pitiful displays of egotism; a tyrannical spirit; indolence as to making difficult investigations.

Observance of Intra-Professional Rules

Journalism like any other vocation has its rules covering the relations of its practitioners with one another.

Criticisms here do not originate with the public but are with-

in the "family." They have importance as indicating the standards of honor recognized generally within the group. Reporters on rival newspapers, for example, are not usually supposed to collaborate in gathering news in order to save work, but are often accused of doing so; release dates are sometimes broken; news sent to its clients or members by one press association is sometimes stolen by another; unfair methods in securing exclusive use of a common means of transmission of news are often employed; special writers are sometimes induced to break contracts with one paper in order to go to another.

The foregoing enumeration indicates the points at which the issue is drawn as to the merits of the press.

Let us hope that no one newspaper has ever been accused of having all the faults set forth in the indictment, and let us not forget that many, very many, admirable newspapers, large and small, are almost unscathed by criticism.

CHAPTER II

FACT IN THE NEWS—AND FICTION

The merchant who persistently delivers goods inferior to those ordered by his patrons is no worse than the publisher who delivers misinformation when the public orders facts. And no one can seriously doubt that the public does order facts from its newspaper. Facts constitute the solid, opinion-building portion of the mental meal to which the public sits down twice a day. To be sure, the public wants a balanced ration. It likes to have its appetite whetted by a fruit-cocktail heading or two; it appreciates a salad of editorial opinion made as palatable as possible with a little dressing of humor or satire; it expects its dessert in the form of a slice of funny-column cake or comic-strip pudding—and sometimes, like other children, it eats its dessert first; but the public knows that it is really the roast-beef-and-mashed-potatoes-and-vegetables of fact that keep it in sound health. The ills that follow a diet of misinformation may not be as acute as ptomaine poisoning, but their insidious effects may spread through an entire community and persist for many years.

Accuracy is the most elementary thing in journalism, and yet it is never completely mastered. Its lessons may be learned by heart one day, only to be imperfectly remembered the next. No journalist regards inaccuracy, either inadvertent or deliberate, as a good thing, but nevertheless many journalists condone it as a necessary evil in the attainment of speed and the maximum of news interest, trusting in a high general average of authenticity to maintain confidence in the paper within the margin of safety.

A careful observer from the newspaper angle, Isaac D. White, director of the *New York World's* bureau of accuracy and fair play, has said:

My own observation and experience tell me that the newspapers are less accurate than they were. I believe there has been a growing tendency among newspaper readers generally to distrust much that they read. Certain it is that to-day many persons in the United States, in print and by word of mouth, sometimes justly and sometimes otherwise, are harsh in their criticism of the newspapers with respect to their accuracy and fairness.

But I believe that these present conditions are only a natural result of rapid growth and development; that having passed through a most remarkable revolutionary stage we find our surroundings for the time being disordered and chaotic, and that as we become accustomed to them we shall recognize the dangers that beset us and make a determined effort to restore order and a proper sense of proportion.

Accuracy and fair play are inseparable in journalism. Without accuracy you cannot have fair play. Inaccuracy is to-day the greatest peril that the newspapers have to overcome. It results continually in injury to innocent persons. It causes the public at large to lose confidence in newspapers in general and the offending newspapers in particular, to question the sincerity of their professions and to distrust their motives. The reader who loses faith in the news columns will not be impressed with what he finds on the editorial page. A newspaper's real influence must be measured by the number of readers who believe in it.

It is these rapid-fire evening newspapers that are responsible to a large degree for the reputation for inaccuracy that is shared by their more stable morning contemporaries.

The morning papers print the news of yesterday, while the evening papers print the news of to-day—may, in fact, more properly be said to print the news of the hour. Without for a moment wishing to excuse their inaccuracy, but with a keen desire to overcome it, it must be conceded as a matter of course that there is much more reason for inaccuracy in the evening papers than in the morning.

The morning newspaper reporter on many of his assignments may have all day and until after midnight, if necessary, to gather his facts and put them in writing.

The evening newspaper reporter during his hours of duty is on the jump almost continually, making his inquiries under high pressure and rushing to the nearest telephone to report his findings to a rewrite man in the office, who, in turn, rattles off the story at high speed on a typewriter.

If a rival newspaper is first to get an important story on the street it means trouble for the reporters who are beaten. If limitation of time makes it impossible to get more than a bare outline of

the facts for any particular edition, it is obvious that the reporter or the rewrite man, or both, must jump to some more or less logical conclusion or draw on imagination to fill in the details.

CASE.—When Mayor Gaynor was shot, one paper reported that he was attacked while sitting in his steamship cabin, that the bullet entered his temple, and that he toppled over into the arms of his wife. Another paper had it that he was promenading on deck when fired upon, that the bullet struck him in the back of the neck, and that he fell into the arms of his secretary, who later telephoned to Mrs. Gaynor at her home.

Comment.—Uncertainty in regard to details when frankly admitted, is one thing; when concealed beneath unqualified assertion, it is quite another matter.

As the Public Feels about It

Such stereotyped phrases as, "You can't believe anything you see in a newspaper," or, "That is only a newspaper story," are not to be taken too seriously; but neither are they to be dismissed with contempt as is the custom of some who work conscientiously at the making of newspapers. They are an exaggerated symptom of a genuine ailment. And the ailment is the disillusionment which every individual experiences, more or less early in life, as to the dependability of the press. The prestige of the printed page—not alone the newspaper page—is one of those impedimenta which every person begins to unload at the threshold of the critical age. Inaccuracies in newspapers, within the personal experience of the individual, lead to a generalization and to a suspicion as to the credibility of all news. Inaccuracies in small things breed doubt as to accuracy in larger things. And so, disparagement of the newspaper's reliability has come to be a sort of tenet in the professed *credo* of the American public. That the public thinks more highly of newspapers than it usually speaks of them is obvious to any student of newspaper influence. The criticisms are shouted from the housetops, the commendation is whispered in the secret chambers of the mind, after the general manner of man. The fact that the popular appraisal of the newspaper is unjust does not dispose of the matter. The skepticism is there.

It blocks the road to the newspaper's objective—maximum influence—and its removal is a matter of immense importance.

Giving the Devil His Due

Considering its multitudinous opportunities to make errors and taking into account the conditions under which it is produced, a newspaper—almost any newspaper, great or small—is surprisingly accurate.

One investigator, Lee A. White, carefully estimated the number of chances for mistake in one issue of the *Detroit News*—the statements of fact and the typographical hazards—and reported that only one error was made to every 3,250 opportunities. This, he thought, gave a better percentage of accuracy to the newspaper, which gathers its data in a few hours, than can be claimed by the historians who take a hundred years to get things straight and then do not always succeed.

Another journalist of distinction, James Keeley, put the matter thus:

In the hurry of getting out in eight hours a 100,000-word picture of what has occurred in twenty-four hours it is absurd to imagine that in the 25,000 statements of fact in these 100,000 words there should not be a mistake. I am not trying to cover with a mantle of explanation every error that appears in a newspaper. For some errors there is no excuse. The strength of a chain is the strength of its weakest link, and there are defective links in all chains. If there were none, there would be no railroad accidents, histories would not have to be rewritten, banks would not fail, steamers would not wander from their course and go down freighted with human souls. None of these things would happen if orders were obeyed. There is a machine in the pressroom of the *Chicago Tribune* which the inventor proudly asserts is "fool-proof." The man who invents a "fool-proof" attachment for humanity will be the greatest benefactor the world has known. But I am afraid his footsteps are hardly audible in the halls of Time—even to reportorial ears.

Ralph Pulitzer, publisher of the *New York World*, has described the problem as follows:

In a big newspaper office, in a night, 166,000 words are written by about 2,000 different contributors, reporters, and correspondents;

some news comes in by wire, and some by telephone. The latter is written by rewrite men, other news is brought in by reporters and various news associations, and the whole mass is read and handled in six hours by copy-readers, and greatly reduced and condensed. It is put in type by linotype operators at a rate of sixteen words a minute and printed at the rate of 120,000 papers an hour. This fearful pressure, which the public demands, should make people sitting comfortably at their breakfast tables a little more charitable than they are in flaying "the wanton inaccuracy of a reckless press."

And yet, although the case for the newspaper has a certain plausibility, it makes more for forgiveness than for vindication. The question remains as to whether its reasons are not mere excuses. Evidently the number of opportunities for error cannot be reduced except by changing the newspaper into something else. But is it so certain that the conditions of newspaper production cannot be improved? When a chef is supposed to serve mushrooms but serves toadstools instead, is he sufficiently excused by the plea that he had to hurry, or that he could not tell a toadstool from a mushroom, or that somebody gave them to him for mushrooms? Isn't he supposed to know?

Obstacles to Newspaper Accuracy

It seems desirable to look more closely at some of the active enemies a fact has to dodge or overcome before it can arrive, safe and sound, in the news columns.

Carelessness and Indifference

Both the news editor of the small paper and the reporter on the larger paper come under the well-known terms of the "human equation." They are not above taking a chance when verification is difficult. And like all gamblers they lose at least part of the time. And some, who seldom gamble, often blunder. Journalists sometimes give a fair imitation of the famous blind men who went to "see" the elephant and were at variance, because one felt the elephant's leg and thought the elephant like a tree, another ran his hand along the elephant's side and thought the elephant like a wall, a third took hold of the ele-

phant's tail and said the elephant was clearly like a rope, a fourth touched the elephant's curling trunk and said the elephant was like a snake, and a fifth touched the elephant's tusk and declared an elephant was like a spear. Even the best reporter has his "blind" spells.

Again, every newspaper office is infested by those imps of perversity whose one aim is to muddle everything, including the mind of the tired news writer. If the reporter puts a thing down on paper in exactly the right terms, and if the copy-reader leaves it as it ought to be and places the right heading on it, then the imps follow it to the composing room and beset those who put it into type or slugs and those who read the proof. And if all these assaults fail, success may attend a last-minute attack on the make-up man, who learns early in life all about the total depravity of a certain type of slug which insists on getting itself transposed or turned upside down or thrown into the "hell box" when the line ought to be in the paper. It must be admitted that the imps contribute much to the amusement of the reader. He is refreshed by learning that a criminal has been "interred in prison"; that a couple recently married "had both been widowed"; that some inoffensive man has "been beaten in the rear of his establishment"; or that a wreck has been caused by the "failure of the engineers to take on air used in the manipulation of the brakes." But the amusement is at the expense of the dignity and prestige of the paper.

At the basis of all remedial measures for cutting down the percentage of inaccuracy must be an appreciation of the worth and dignity of a fact, as such, and of the mischief done by even the most insignificant error. Then such office devices as may suggest themselves may be used to promote vigilance and to provide checks increasing the opportunities for detection of errors.

"Accuracy, accuracy, accuracy," is the reminder posted in some newspaper offices and in all schools of journalism. A bulletin board on which attention is called to mistakes in the previous day's paper is provocative of watchfulness by the news staff. A system of demerits, or even fines, has been suc-

cessfully used. A rigorous policy of publishing corrections emphasizes the seriousness of an offense against the truth.

Bias of Reporter, Editor, or Owner

Personal or institutional bias does not so much exclude the unpalatable as it welcomes too warmly the palatable in the news. For example, in the field of labor strife, whence arise some of the bitterest accusations against the press, a careful survey of news sent out by press associations, and of news actually published, will usually show that an adequate amount of information from the labor side, including statements by labor leaders, is handled; but it is often overshadowed by the greater mass of material emanating from the opposite side.

News unpalatable to the paper is sure to be scrutinized for inaccuracies while the more savory kind is likely to pass unquestioned.

CASE.—The secretary of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People went to a southern state to place before officials information concerning his organization, with a view to forming local branches in the state. Without apparent provocation, except prejudice, he was set upon and beaten. Newspaper accounts, North as well as South, were full of inaccuracies: "He had been warned by the judge to leave town," and "He urged negroes to claim social equality with whites," and "He had been inciting negroes to violence," and "He makes a living by inciting race feeling."

Comment.—In describing this case, Herbert Seligman, writing in the *Nation*, made this appropriate comment: "It is unfortunate that the incident should have occurred, still more so that it should have been misrepresented, most of all, perhaps, in that it represents a disposition to leave the approach to race relations in the hands of a mob, many of whose leaders occupy editorial chairs."

CASE.—An elaborate survey of the news from Russia appearing in a New York newspaper from March, 1917, to March, 1920, made by Walter Lippmann and others, revealed a high percentage of error.

Comment.—Some of the conclusions reached were: that

"the professional standards of journalism are not high enough, and the discipline by which standards are maintained not strong enough, to carry the press triumphantly through a test so severe as that provided by the Russian revolution;" that "certain correspondents are totally untrustworthy because their sympathies are too deeply engaged;" and that "at critical periods the time-honored tradition of protecting news against editorials breaks down."

Ignorance on the Part of Journalists

When the necessity confronts a reporter of writing a story dealing with news of science or art, no amount of painstaking care can make up for lack of the background afforded by education, and not only the background but the processes of a disciplined mind. The scarcity in the past of reporters with any knowledge of science has damaged science and has cheated the public. The scientists' distrust of the newspapers has withheld from the public much interesting news, and this condition has reacted against science in the form of public indifference. In recent years a "Science Service" of syndicated articles, edited by E. E. Slosson, has done something to supply the lack; but nothing can take the place of the well-informed reporter.

CASE.—A professor in a western university made an official report containing a reference to the possible effects of a certain drug on the human body. A reporter with no appreciation of the absurdities of his deductions, and also, perhaps, with no concern in a matter so idealistic, wrote a story about the "drug that produces growth in the human body," and that would, perhaps, "in the next generation create a race of giants." The article was sent broadcast, at every re-publication acquiring some new imbecility.

Comment.—The story did more than embarrass the scientist: it was actually damaging to him; raised a prejudice against the drug in conservative minds; added to the contempt in which many scientists hold the press; misled the public.

But it was a standard magazine, not a newspaper, that told not long ago of the "recent discovery of the giant star Betelgeuse."

Errors by Informants

The most accurate person, as an observer and transmitter of facts, is probably the scientist. Next to him comes the reporter. He is responsible for many errors in the newspaper, to be sure, but a large share of them originate with his "news sources." An experimenter, testing the observational powers of a class of university students, asked them how high was the flagstaff on the university hall. One man said, "It is about eighteen feet high"; another, "fifteen feet"; another, "twelve." The fact was that the hall had no flagstaff.

The psychologist measures differences in observational powers by enacting a scene before a group of people and then comparing the reports made by all those present. Incredible differences of opinion as to what took place are usually revealed. By contrast, a good reporter's accuracy in observation appears in its true light as really exceptional. He can see more nearly straight than anybody else; moreover, he has learned to guard against his romantic tendencies, and he is watchful of his prejudices. Given a newspaper that employs such reporters and editors, and that has no objective but the truth, and the public will be well served.

But the paper must exercise eternal vigilance against statements given to it by people whose only source of information is rumor. Rumors from inaccessible sources, as, for example, the many reports of the death of Lenin during the years 1917-23, may properly be printed as rumors, but surely not as facts. The newspaper that is unwilling to attach a "rumor" label to doubtful news invites discredit with its readers.

Even information from the most authoritative sources must be subjected to scrutiny.

CASE.—The War Department distributed to the newspapers a list of alleged draft evaders with the request that these names be published. It was explained that the Department had two purposes in view; namely, to obtain help in running down actual evaders and to help clear the names of those listed as evaders who were not evaders except possibly in a purely technical sense, it being assumed to be probable that many names in the list were names of those who, after registering

in the draft, had volunteered for service without completing the draft-law formalities.

When this list was presented to the newspapers, the question had to be considered whether it was desirable to print the list as given out, not to print it at all, or to deal with the matter on some middle ground. Some papers printed the list as issued, others refrained from printing it at all, and still others dealt with it as raw news material to be investigated.

This last method of dealing with the lists was pursued by the *New York Times*. It brought out the fact that many names in the list were names of men who had entered one branch or another of the military service, some of them serving with conspicuous honor. The results of these inquiries were included in news stories in the *Times* setting forth that such and such a man was listed as a draft evader but that inquiry disclosed that he had gone into the Navy, or into the Aviation Service, or into some other branch of military service, as the case might be.

In some instances the evidence of service was fully convincing, whereas in other instances it rested on the unsupported statements of members of the man's family or of his friends. It was also found in some instances that men listed as draft evaders had died after registering for the draft but before being called into service; such men were listed as evaders of the draft when their families had failed to file the proper notification with the draft authorities. In many cases, of course, negative results were obtained in these inquiries, partly because men who purposely evaded the draft gave a wrong name or address, or both, in registering.

The investigation of the list required the service of a considerable number of men, each of whom was assigned to a section of the list given out for publication from day to day.

The list eventually became so long that it was impracticable to make inquiry concerning each individual name, but the inquiry was made sufficiently extensive and carried on sufficiently long by the *Times* definitely to establish the fact that the list of alleged draft evaders included the names of many men other than those who intentionally evaded their obligations to the country.

In due course the War Department issued exonerations of many men whose names were included in the list, but in most

cases, at least in so far as the early draft lists were concerned, only after the *Times* and other newspapers that dealt with the lists as news had disclosed the real facts concerning the services of these men.

Comment.—The work of investigation made it apparent that the most casual inquiry on the part of the War Department, through such agencies as it might have brought to its help, would have disclosed that many names in the list could be eliminated before publication on the ground that they were not the names of willful violators of the draft law.

Deception by Informants

Deliberate deception of the newspaper by outsiders runs all the way, in motive, from the practical joke to insidious propaganda. The only phase of the matter requiring consideration is propaganda, and that is treated separately as deserving special attention in any survey of the problems of the press.

Speed

The greatest enemy of accuracy is speed. That men work at maximum efficiency under pressure is only a half-truth. And the worst feature of the situation is that speed appears in the guise of a patron saint of journalism. Sins committed in that name have absolution in advance.

There are many fine maxims that place rapidity in a secondary position, such as, "The first paper to print the story *right* scores a beat," or "It is still news until it is printed correctly"; but, after all, the supreme thrill in newspaper work comes from the attainment of superior speed.

The basis for this apotheosis of one function of journalism is valid enough: the public wants speed; competition requires it. But the results, though often spectacular, are more often demoralizing. The situation confronting the news desk has been thus described:

Each issue of a morning paper contains from two hundred to four hundred pieces of news. Each represents some problem to be solved, each calls for some decision to be rendered. Custom and office rules sit in judgment on the vast majority, but never a night passes but some question is raised—and this question has to be

decided in a hurry. The editor cannot sit down at his ease and think it over. The fast mail trains do not wait for the man who cannot make up his mind, and the subscriber who fails to get his paper with his oranges and oatmeal is apt to make a change. Sometimes the man who has to say "Yes" or "No" will say "No" when he should have said "Yes"—unfortunately.

Much of the inventiveness of five generations has been expended in accelerating life, and rapidity of news dissemination has been one of its most striking achievements. Steam and electricity have been marvellously applied to news gathering and newspaper production. The development of the modern press, producing in an hour more papers than an early type of press could turn off in a year, has been one factor. The perfection of composing machines, each doing the work of several old-time "swifties" at type-setting, has been another factor. A book would be required to describe the process of evolution that has produced the newspaper plant of our day.

The human factor has likewise been perfected, but the nicety of performance required for its part of the work is not promoted by too great haste.

Try as we may to appreciate the difference in conditions, we can hardly suppress a feeling of pity, bordering on derision, for the boasted achievements of early papers in Boston, Philadelphia, and New York, which were able to print news from Washington before it was two weeks old. Editorial comment was often not more than six weeks behind an important event. The history of American journalism from that time to the present is enlivened with stories of newspaper enterprise manifesting an ever accelerating speed.

CASE.—A comparatively recent instance in which a newspaper went to considerable trouble and expense to satisfy intense public interest—and beat competitors—was described as follows:

The *St. Louis Star*, in handling the story of the selective draft, foresaw the demand for quick news on the draft lottery. It recognized that it would be almost impossible to compile and put in type the numbers, names, and addresses of all those who were

drawn in the lottery at Washington if everything was held up until the drawing started.

A force of thirty stenographers was employed to copy the draft lists by wards, and as soon as this work had been accomplished these numbers, names, and addresses were sent to the composing-room and set. After the proof-readers had finished, the names and addresses of the men in each of the twenty-eight wards of the city whose registration number was 1, were assembled on a galley under the heading of No. 1. This was done on each of the numbers from 1 to the highest registration number, which was 4386.

In all, 85,000 names were set, requiring approximately 425 linotype hours, and tying up three tons of metal.

As soon as the first number was drawn and flashed over the wire, all that was necessary to do in the *Star* office was lift from the galleys all the numbers and addresses of St. Louisans whose number corresponded to the first number drawn.

Within ten minutes after the first draft number was drawn in Washington, the *Star* was on the street with a list of names and numbers of St. Louisans who had been drawn.

An hour later the *Star's* noon edition, with thirteen columns of draft names, was on sale. The first complete list of St. Louisans drafted appeared in the *Star* at 2:10 P. M.

The work was handled in such an efficient manner that both morning contemporaries saw fit to comment very favorably in editorials.

Stories of such occasions in which journalistic speed trod closely on the heels of Time have been recorded without number. Out of them a tradition of speed has been fabricated—speed and scoops.

To-day a press association advertises, "Five real beats in three days," ranging from two hours to a few minutes. Clients of one news-disseminating agency boasted that they printed the news of a Japanese premier's death one hour ahead of their competitors.

Such is the spirit of journalism—enterprising, admirable. But it is not necessary to present examples in order to make plain the cost of emphasizing one phase of an activity to the point at which it becomes antagonistic to other and more essential factors. Speed as a fetish in journalism is malignant. It is as dangerously antisocial as any other kind of speed mania.

The discount which newspaper readers have learned to make

on the early estimates of the numbers killed or injured in any disaster is a commonplace. To be sure, the public demands an early estimate, and when such figures are clearly presented as conjecture, no fault is to be found; but too often the word, "probably," seems not to be in the newspaper's vivid lexicon. The license which the ordinary mortal exercises to exaggerate when excited, does not extend to the journalist.

CASE.—A prominent practitioner of sensational journalism is fond of describing how one day, some years ago, the fact that seismic disturbance had been previously reported from Messina coupled with the report that communication with that city had been interrupted, evidently by the breaking of the cable, led his newspaper to announce that a thousand people had been killed by an earthquake. The deductions made were: that only a severe shock would break the cable; that at the hour when the cable was broken the people were in their homes asleep; and that since those homes were of stone construction, the number of casualties would be great. All that remained was to look up the figures on the population of the city and decide upon the proper percentage of death. Thus "an expert, using his best judgment, created a smashing story out of nothing but the absence of any news." And, as vindication for the proceeding, the news impresario tells how the reports which came from Italy a day or two later bore out the improvised story—except that the number of dead reached a figure some hundreds higher than the guess!

Comment.—Little fault can be found with the employment of guesswork if the reader is told in the heading and in the story that he is getting conjecture and not verified fact. The law of probabilities does not permit the news gambler to win all the time, as he did in the foregoing instance. When he loses, journalism loses.

A refreshing instance of the policy calculated to inspire public confidence was that in which the following paragraph appeared in a story on the number killed in an earthquake in Japan:

All these messages are being transmitted by the Associated Press without vouching for their accuracy, realizing the difficulty in obtaining exact information and the inevitability of excitement and exaggeration accompanying such a disaster.

CASE.—Very often a "scoop" is the result of intuition. It is related that Delane, editor of the *London Times*, was sitting at dinner one evening when the talk turned on climate and constitutions. "By the way," said Sir William Gull, "Lord Northbrook was asking me to-day whether I thought the climate of India would suit him." That was enough for Delane: the viceroyalty of India was vacant; next day the *Times* announced that Lord Northbrook would be the next viceroy, and so it proved. Delane was as clever as the other London editor who stated that the government was about to appeal to the country. He was absolutely right. No one had told him; but he learned casually that a cabinet minister was clearing out his pigeon holes.

Comment.—These are interesting instances in which intuition came off victorious. The history of journalism makes small record of those in which it suffered defeat. That record is found in the skepticism of the public as to newspaper statements of fact.

In one recent instance, however, history will probably take note of the world-wide effects of the attainment of the maximum speed in reporting:

CASE.—Through a dispatch from France, sent by an American journalist, November 7, 1918, it was announced that the armistice had been signed that morning and that hostilities had ceased. A delirium of joy swept the United States. Disillusionment came the next day and four days of agonized waiting followed, until the armistice was actually signed.

Comment.—Competent observers who have told the story of the premature peace report have absolved the American correspondent of personal blame. In fact a military officer of high rank who permitted the report to reach the correspondent took full responsibility in the matter. But a system in which speed is the watchword seems to have brought discredit on itself. The same report reached the English and French newspapers, but was handled with great conservatism. The consequences, historically, can never be appraised; but one observer, Arthur Hornblow, Jr., writing in the *Century Magazine*, concludes:

President Wilson cast his important decision for an armistice after he had witnessed the demonstrations of November 7, reliable

proof of the country's sentiment. . . . Who knows but what a still fight-hearted American people might have cried loudly, "On to Berlin," had not the sweet branch of the olive tree been placed prematurely in their hands and found much, very much, to their liking?

CASE.—A press association instructed all its correspondents to see that the word, "to-day," appeared in the first sentence of every story. Violent distortions were sometimes necessary to attain this appearance of timeliness.

Comment.—One critic professed that he expected, some day, to read a dispatch like this:

New York. Jan. 1.—John Smith is still a corpse to-day, having died at 7 P.M. last night.

CASE.—Three city papers were ambitious to be first on the street with the announcement of the verdict in a sensational case. The verdict came. One of the newspapers was on the street definitely ahead of the others in one part of the downtown district. The second paper was ahead in another quarter of the down-town district. The third paper, the one that was first to claim a beat, was minutes behind the other two at all points. But all three papers printed claims of having scored beats, and ridiculed the counterclaims of their opponents: the first paper, "As usual we presented to our readers ahead of our competitors . . .," and the second, "Our extra was on sale at all corners fifteen minutes in advance of any other paper," and the third, "Again demonstrating its supremacy when it beat the other papers to the street with the first news of the verdict"

Comment.—Many persons saw two, and some three, of the papers. What happened to their confidence in the reliability of these three newspapers and—much more serious—the reliability of all newspapers?

Speed in English Journalism

Sport is made of the slowness of English newspapers—those, at least, that have not yet become "Americanized." One satirist, Frank W. O'Malley, formerly on the staff of the New York *Sun*, writing in the *Saturday Evening Post*, has imagined the sort of memoranda that a Park Row city editor, who had

"inherited" Fleet Street, might leave for the night editor in his paper:

Dear Clarke: Liveliest day we've had in months. Expected we'd lead off to-morrow with the big fire in a shirtwaist factory in East Twentieth Street, in which—so a friend just telephoned me kindly from The Players—332 employes, mostly girls, were killed in a few minutes. Unfortunately, however, the fire didn't start until a few minutes after four this afternoon, or just when the staff's afternoon tea things were being arranged on the desks by Perkins and the office second man.

Tried my damndest to persuade our new politics man from London, young Hogan-Daffodil, to run up from Tammany Hall to look the fire over, but he answered over the telephone he specialized solely in statesmanship and, besides, was about to toddle out into Fourteenth Street for his own dish of tea. Anyway, the rabble of our city, he said, would doubtless view the conflagration at first-hand, and the rest of our readers would not be interested in these incidents in the lives of the working classes.

Maybe you can lift a good fire story out of the first editions of the other papers, boss.

Young Basil Maude—that Oxford lad who reads fortunes so delightfully with tea-leaf dregs—almost got another crackerjack light story while covering the Electrical Show at the Garden this afternoon. The show's publicity man got Thomas A. Edison to box three fast rounds with Marie Dressler 'safternoon, but just as Battling Dressler was leading an opening hot one at Kid Edison's jaw, Maude had to start back here to the office because of that Fleet Street Union eight-hour law. As it was, the clock struck five here just as he was whittling a new goose-quill pen and arranging his blotting-sand, so he had to lock his desk and go home without writing anything at all. Lift it.

We'll have to lift the whole paper to-morrow, boss. The staff tells me to-morrow is what they call a Benk Olidye—Whoopsuntide, or something—and the whole damned outfit will spend to-morrow in Brooklyn, punting on the Gowanus Canal. Pip-pip, old dear!

Yours in haste,

Mallon.

And Mr. O'Malley adds that "Fleet Street at this writing is in a journalistic uproar—so I learn from London papers that have just reached me—over Lord Carnarvon's excavations in the Valley of the Nile. The jolly old *Times*, I notice, has beaten the rest of the street to a frazzle. The *Times* announces boldly on its first news page that King Tut is dead."

All of which is amusing and throws a desirable sidelight on the subject under discussion, but is far from disproving that strict subordination of speed to accuracy and truth—whether or not that accounts for English deliberation—is an indispensable policy of reliable journalism.

Accuracy in the Heads

One of the ironies of the news columns lies in the fact that at the very point where scrupulous accuracy is most needed it is most difficult to attain. By all students of the newspaper, the headlines are held responsible for most of the distrust of newspaper statements. The technique of head-writing, making it difficult to present always the shade of meaning justified in the story, even if haste were not required, is the source of some of the trouble. And the other enemies of accuracy do their part to muddle things in the heads.

CASE.—A news story stated that friends of a man who had committed suicide thought that his act had been partly the result of a warning he had received to leave town. The heading said, "Fear of Ku Klux Klan Drives Man to Suicide."

Comment.—This is an example of the most common of faults in allowing the head to go further than the story warrants. Qualifying words and phrases have too great difficulty passing through the eye of the needle.

CASE.—Speaker Champ Clark opposed the Tolls Bill sponsored by President Wilson. One heading over a story of fact regarding a speech by Mr. Clark was, "Speaker Shows That Wounds Received at Baltimore Have Never Quite Healed." Another story chronicling the passage of the bill was headed, "Wilson Wins by 86 Votes in Face of Final Attack by Clark."

Comment.—Examples of interpretive headings expressing the bias of the paper. As one critic has said:

The majority of the readers of newspapers get their impressions of the news of the day solely through the headlines. They read the headlines, skip the editorials, and plunge into the vaudeville section. Therefore, I take it as one of the responsibilities of the newspaper to have the headlines reflect the real content of the story and not the editorial comment. A man who is accused of

murder, or accused of anything else, is usually guilty in the headlines, although the story may be a plain and accurate statement of fact. Unfair headline writing is a most flagrant and inexcusable violation of the duty of a newspaper to the public.

Another critic, waxing ironical, approaches the matter thus:

Think what the present headline humorists could have done to Lincoln's Gettysburg address if they had been actively at work in 1863. "Cannot Dedicate Gettysburg Cemetery," we can imagine them as having written in some rollicking mood. Or in another and wittier vein they might have said: "Fathers Conceived and Brought Forth New Nation, Says President." Supposing their mirth had for the moment become a little irresponsible, what fun to say "President Urges Stamping Out Rebels," or, "Measures Needed to Increase Devotion to Union." One of these jesters might even have read the first sentence of the address quite, quite through, and have shared his discovery with the world in this language: "Questions Whether All Men Are Created Equal." Another of them could have found in the last sentence of the address its true essence and nub: "Government of People by People for People to Perish from Earth."

A statistically inclined investigator who examined a thousand headings in thirty different newspapers found that one-fifth of them were open to criticism. Seven per cent were inaccurate and thirteen per cent were editorial.

Individual Expressions on Accuracy

The editor of a small-town newspaper, John Redmond of the Burlington (Kansas) *Republican*, puts the matter about as all his colleagues in the country field of journalism would put it:

Safety First compels a country paper to be accurate and fair. Too many people know the facts to let inaccurate news items get by, and the people of the rural communities are too fair to stand for unfairness, even in their favorite paper.

If the news writer will remember that what he writes is read by his friends and neighbors, it is easy to stick to the straight and narrow path, and this is especially true in a one-paper town. In towns having two papers and the resultant factions, strict impartiality is much more of a problem, but it was the policy of this paper when there were four other papers here, to write stuff on

the theory that ours was the only paper on earth, and therefore should get it right.

Another country editor sets forth an interesting consideration:

In the daily grind of newspaper work, it does not occur to the newspaper makers that the facts they set down in their columns will be used as the information from which future history will be written. In their daily rounds in search for news they do not always think of the high value that will be put upon the files of their papers in after years. Events of seemingly small importance are recorded with no thought that those events may have a deciding value in the future. It is impossible to estimate at the time it is recorded the exact value of any information that comes under the observation of the careful news gatherer. It may seem insignificant and unimportant but the future may give it value. So it happens every day with the newspaper maker, that in his efforts to get the rush jobs off the press, to round up the belated advertising, to get the type set and the forms locked up so that the paper may get out on time, details that make for accuracy are disregarded—the most important function of a newspaper is overlooked. The newspaper maker should never forget that much that the future will know of the present of his community will be gathered from the files of his paper.

That exacting American publisher, Joseph Pulitzer, commented on accuracy as follows:

You do not know what it costs me to try and keep the *World* up to a high standard of accuracy—the money, the time, the thought, the praise, the blame, the constant watchfulness. I do not say that the *World* never makes a mistake in its news columns. I wish I could say it.

What I say is that there are not half a dozen papers in the United States which tamper with the news, which publish what they know to be false. But if I thought that I had done no better than that I would be ashamed to own a paper. It is not enough to refrain from publishing fake news, it is not enough to take ordinary care to avoid the mistakes which arise from the ignorance, the carelessness, the stupidity of one or more of the many men who handle the news before it gets into print. You have got to do much more than that. You have got to make everyone connected with the paper—your editors, your reporters, your correspondents, your rewrite men, your proof-readers—believe that accuracy is to a newspaper what virtue is to a woman.

Group Judgments as to Accuracy

All journalistic codes commend accuracy. Typical examples are the following:

From the Oregon code of ethics for journalism:

We will put accuracy above all other considerations in the written word, whether editorial, advertisement, article, or news story.

From the canons of journalism adopted by the National Association of Newspaper Editors:

Good faith with the reader is the foundation of all journalism worthy of the name. By every consideration of good faith a newspaper is constrained to be truthful. It is not to be excused for lack of thoroughness or accuracy within its control, or failure to obtain command of these essential qualities. Headlines should be fully warranted by the contents of the articles which they surmount.

Means of Promoting Accuracy

Several of the larger newspapers have, in recent years, set up within their editorial organization an agency for the promotion of accuracy. Sometimes it is one man, sometimes a group. It represents an effort to get away from the old hit-or-miss methods under which inaccuracy seldom worried anybody in the newspaper office unless it led to serious results in the courts; and anybody, from the office boy up, handled complaints.

The Bureau of Accuracy and Fair Play, established by the New York *World* in 1913, was the first department of the kind and has been used to some extent as a model for other papers. The reasons for such an undertaking were thus explained:

A good working majority of editors, reporters and copy-readers are tried and true men, upon whom every reliance may be placed. Accuracy is part of their religion. But some good men seem to be naturally careless or reckless without realizing it. There will always be found a small scattering of mediocre men, lacking in ambition and enthusiasm, who are in constant need of bracing. Then, too, there is always being "tried out" a minority force, made up of raw recruits who are an unknown and uncertain quantity.

The correspondents in the big cities are for the most part picked men, but there are hundreds of correspondents in smaller towns whom the editor has never seen and knows only by a name written in a book. Most of them are editors or reporters on local newspapers in their home towns, and the work they do as correspondents is to them a secondary consideration.

These and other patent considerations led to the establishment of the bureau. Its organization was announced in the following notice to the staff:

By direction of Mr. Pulitzer, a Bureau of Accuracy and Fair Play has been established under the immediate supervision of the legal department.

Objects: To promote accuracy and fair play, to correct carelessness and to stamp out fakes and fakers.

All complaints involving these principles, received in any department of the *World*, shall in future be turned over to the Bureau, these complaints to include libel actions, letters from attorneys and others, complaints made in person at the *World* office.

Special attention will be given to so-called "harmless fakes." These have done more, because of their frequency, to destroy confidence in the newspapers and to detract from their influence than all unintentional errors combined.

The Bureau will determine whether or not these complaints are well founded, and if they are, who is responsible for the matter complained of. It shall be the duty of persons responsible for articles complained of diligently to aid in their investigation under direction of the Bureau and to make a report in writing to be filed with the complaint.

Corrections shall be published whenever fair play demands it, as conspicuously as articles complained of, all corrections to be passed upon by the Bureau before publication in order to prevent any publication that might be used against us in the event of an action for libel.

Persons held responsible for offending articles are liable to the following judgments and penalties:

1. Deliberate faking, punishable by dismissal.
2. Gross carelessness or gross unfairness, or both, first offense punishable by from ten to thirty days suspension; second offense, thirty to sixty days suspension or dismissal.
3. Carelessness or unfairness, or both, first offense punishable by reprimand and warning or by suspension for from two to ten days; second offense, suspension ten to thirty days; third offense, thirty to sixty days or dismissal.

4. Carelessness in addresses or in misspelling proper names, punishable first offense by warning; second offense, suspension for two days; third offense, suspension for three days; and so on in arithmetical progression.

Whenever penalties are imposed notice thereof shall be posted on the bulletin board with a statement summarizing the complaint.

How It Works

Reports as to the results of ten years' operation of the bureau, and as to the influence of similar agencies in other newspaper offices, show that the setting up of a standard stimulates a desire to live up to it. In his first report, Richard Linthicum, of the *World* bureau said:

After the bureau had followed up a dozen or more errors upon complaint of persons involved and had traced the errors to their source through the regular method of requiring written explanations from the writer and copy-reader, there was a noticeable decrease in the number of such errors.

The number of errors that may be classified as involuntary misstatements has decreased steadily until they are practically *nil*. Prior to the establishment of the bureau they were among the most common errors.

Errors in names, which were not uncommon, because in many instances sufficient effort was not made by writers to verify them, are now rare.

A recent instance of the efforts for accuracy on the part of editors as well as writers and copy-readers was a story founded upon a rumor of a mysterious Sound steamer, name unknown, alleged to be in great distress and passengers in danger. Other papers printed the rumor, making it as sensational as possible, with no known fact. The *World*, unable to verify it, did not print the story. The rumor proved to be unfounded. There are almost daily cases in which other papers print stories founded on rumors, in which the rumor is exploded by the *World* in the same date of issue.

Serious errors have declined to such a low number that they are now the exceptional errors, those most subject to my criticism being those that have to do with the technical work of news gathering, writing and editing.

A further result is seen in the evidence of increased confidence of readers in the accuracy and fairness of newspapers. In a number of cases persons who had sufficient cause for

libel actions have written letters of appreciation for fair treatment accorded them in the correction of errors.

CASE.—A woman had a colored maid arrested for the theft of a ring. Later the ring was found in a bureau drawer. The newspaper story, indicating that the ring had not been stolen, aroused the indignation of the woman. Later it was proved that the ring had been stolen and replaced. The paper printed a correction. The woman's lawyer wrote:

I want to thank you for your action in the matter. It has done considerable to change my opinion of the news columns of the *World*.

As a result of her experience, my client had taken the attitude, "I don't believe anything that I see in the papers." This attitude I trust will now be changed.

Comment.—One such case amounts to little, but a consistent fight for accuracy, day in and day out, year after year, produces a tremendous aggregate of good will, as the hundreds of appreciative letters received by the *World*, and other newspapers following a similar policy, show.

Another result has been a reduction in the number of libel suits, through fair treatment of the person injured and through discouragement of a certain type of lawyer:

The bureau has made a practice of opposing attacks and complaints that have no merit. In the early stages of its operation it learned that there are lawyers in New York who make a specialty of stirring up libel litigation, and who seemingly are not averse to representing criminals and otherwise disreputable characters who sometimes bring suits on false and perjured complaints. A card index covering a period of more than twenty years reveals the names of lawyers who have made a practice of stirring up libel litigation, and whenever attempts are made to recover damages in these cases the *World* has spared neither trouble nor expense in fighting to the last ditch. As a result some lawyers have been disbarred or suspended from practice, and several notoriously crooked litigants have been sent to prison.

An interesting and unusual method of encouraging accuracy is that employed by the *St. Louis Star* in sending questionnaires to persons mentioned in the paper, asking:

Was your name spelled correctly?
 If not, what is the correct spelling?
 Was the street address correct?
 If not, what is the correct address?
 What statements in the article are inaccurate?

The practice was begun in 1920. Ninety-eight per cent of the thousands of persons approached in this manner returned answers. Frank W. Taylor, managing editor, declared that:

Through this medium we have been enabled to weed out habitually inaccurate or careless members of the staff. At the same time it has served to break down the belief in the minds of thousands of citizens that a newspaper prints only what it believes to be of interest, regardless of facts.

During the *Star's* nation-wide disclosures of the medical diploma mill doctors, I obtained ample first-hand evidence of why the public is justified in doubting the report in many newspapers. Harry Brundidge, our star reporter, who at great personal risk, laid bare the medical crooks, is scientifically careful in collecting and writing his facts. To have seen his accurate, first-hand reports garbled and changed to suit the fancies or whims of what certain editors and reporters regarded as the best selling news angles of the situation, was to gain additional understanding of why the public doubts the veracity of a large section of the press.

As a general commentary on the attitude of responsible newspapers least appreciated by the public, the saying may be quoted, that "For every four dollars such a paper spends in getting a piece of news, it spends six dollars in verifying it."

The Fundamental Virtue

An editorial in the *Outlook* presented the essence of the matter and may well conclude this discussion of accuracy:

Each profession rests upon a fundamental virtue. Thus, as in the minister the fundamental virtue is sincerity and as in the soldier the fundamental virtue is courage, so in journalism the fundamental virtue is truth-telling. Cowardice destroys the specific value of an army. Insincerity destroys the specific value of a church. So failure to tell the truth destroys the specific value of a newspaper, whether it is a weekly newspaper or a daily newspaper.

It is not to be understood, of course, that an occasional lapse

from the truth, because of the untrustworthiness of some individual, or because of human fallibility, is necessarily fatal; but habitual inaccuracy or mendacity—and the one, for all practical purposes, is as disastrous as the other—deprives a newspaper of the very reason for its existence. This does not mean that it deprives the newspaper of existence, because, unfortunately, there are newspapers that exist without any excuse.

Let us put it in another way: If journalism should become saturated with falsehood, either intentionally or carelessly, the whole profession of journalism would be as useless as an army saturated with cowardice would be.

The policy announced by the editor of *Publick Occurrences*, September 25, 1690, is worthy of any paper to-day:

Nothing shall be entered but what we have reason to believe is true, repairing to the best fountains for our information. And when there appears any *material* mistake in anything that is collected, it shall be *corrected* in the next.

Newspaper Faking

There is a type of untrue story which deserves to be mentioned apart from those in which inaccuracy is either unintentional or is at least mixed with a fair proportion of accuracy. This is the deliberate piece of fiction known as the newspaper fake. In its "pure" form it is void of a shred of fact. Usually it is written or published without sinister intent—the expedient of a dull day or a playful mood, or it may be a space writer's means of lengthening his "string." Proof is not lacking, however, that fakes have been printed in the interests of advertisers or to influence public opinion.

From the early days of newspapers to the present, the turgid but, in recent years, diminishing stream of deceptive writing has contaminated journalism. Some examples from various sources may be briefly summarized in order, by contrast, to encourage optimism.

CASE.—By common consent, the most famous newspaper hoax was that known as the "Moon hoax," perpetrated by the *New York Sun* in 1835. "Discoveries" of human beings on the moon were reported to have been made by Sir John Herschel. Public interest was intense for several days until a

rival paper pricked the bubble. The flimsy defense offered for the fraud was that, "It appears to be as natural for the human mind to be craving for the wonderful, the mysterious, the marvellous, and the new discoveries, as it is for the physical appetite to desire food."

Comment.—Giving the public what it wanted—even before that specious phrase had been coined!

Varied Styles in Fakes

A wrecked ship carried a cat which was rescued by the crew. A reporter featured the incident. Reporters who did not do so were reprimanded by their city editors. Other wrecks were reported from time to time. All stories supplied the ships with cats and had them dramatically rescued.

In connection with a series of "bread riots" a reporter hired a half dozen "strong-arm" men to upset bakers' wagons in order to furnish scenes for lively pictures.

During the Civil War, in May, 1864, a young journalist palmed off on two New York newspapers a faked proclamation by President Lincoln, appointing a day of fasting and prayer and calling 400,000 citizens to the army. The object was stock jobbing.

Many people in New York were terrorized, November 9, 1874, by a lurid story of the escape of a lot of wild animals from the Central Park "Zoo."

Many papers printed in good faith the story of how a farmer's wife went out at dusk to meet her husband at the edge of a wood, carrying her baby in her arms. Dimly she saw her husband's form approaching the stile at which she stood. She held out the child to him. He took it and, dropping on all fours, ran off into the woods with the child. She had handed her baby to a bear.

Faking Not Confined to Metropolitan Journalism

While the most notorious fakes have appeared in city papers, their like blot the records of many smaller publications. The incentive to faking is much less in small cities and towns, however, because little revenue is derived from street sales

of papers and because the fact that everybody knows everybody else renders faking less easy. Sometimes a small town fake takes the form of a practical joke on the public.

CASE.—A newspaper in a small city printed a story that a Balkan princess was to visit the town in a few days. Her picture was printed. The public became greatly interested. On the appointed day she arrived. A procession was held. Crowds lined the streets. She was entertained at a ball. Some days later it became known that the "princess" was an impersonator from another town.

Comment.—A harmless hoax in the eyes of some, perhaps, but really far, far removed from the legitimate business of a newspaper.

CASE.—An investigator of newspaper history in the earlier days of a western state has recorded scores of sensational fakes written by newspaper correspondents in the frontier towns. One was the story of the baby in the bored well, printed widely in 1889. The country breathed a sigh of relief when the baby was finally "rescued" on the third day after it had slipped down the narrow hole.

Other similar yarns were: about the bride and bridegroom who were killed by serpents; about the toy balloon which carried away a famous woman's diamond pin when she took into her arms a little child holding the balloon; about a French count who was imprisoned in a cave; about a spiritualist medium who actually "raised" the ghost of Hamlet when a celebrated Shakspearean actor came to the town; about the priest who rode six hundred miles through a prairie fire to give absolution to a dying woman; about the freakish activities of tornadoes; about the homing rabbit that carried the news of an Indian ambushade; and so on without end.

Comment.—These stories have a delicious flavor when recounted years afterwards. The injury such fakes have done does not always show on the surface and cannot be measured with certainty; but they constitute a pernicious trifling with the serious function of journalism and their amusing qualities do not render them any less damaging.

CASE.—The class rooms of the University of Chicago were invaded, some years ago, by sensation-makers who flooded the

public with fake stories in the fields of natural and social science.

Comment.—All universities have suffered from the same practice. The pseudo-scientific article was one of the earliest creations of yellow journalism.

The special article has contributed much to the enrichment of newspapers but it has also been the means of much unpardonable faking.

The Press Agent Fake

Newspapers must be wary if they would not fall victims to the clever press agent who is seeking free publicity for an employer. Faking seems to be an essential part of press agency.

CASE.—At 10 o'clock at night, August 17, 1921, a carrier pigeon fell exhausted in Columbus Circle, New York City. A policeman picked the bird up and took it to the West 47th Street Police station, where he detached from its leg a message dated Wyoming, 8-13-21, signed by a man who was purported to be lost in the Hoodoo Mountains, Yellowstone Park, and asking for help. The message asked that a certain New Yorker be notified. The man named in the message was found. He was a hunter and naturalist and he said that the lost man was a naturalist and camera man. He also identified the bird and said it was one of several the traveler had kept on the roof of his hotel, three of which he took with him to the Yellowstone.

The subconsciousness of the city editor of one paper told him that this story was probably a fake, but there appeared to be no way to verify his suspicions at that late hour of the night. If it were actually true that this carrier pigeon had flown from Yellowstone National Park with a message for help and had fallen exhausted in a New York street, the paper ought to publish the story and take steps to get help to the man from some nearby point before he was starved to death or died from exposure. He was about two thousand miles away. How could the story be verified? If, as was suspected, it was a fake, it was a press agent's story of some kind, intended to exploit some individual, and in that case should not be published. What should the city editor do?

The man who handled this story looked up the flying records of carrier pigeons and found that, in order to cover the two thousand miles between the Hoodoo Mountains and New York, the bird would have had to go farther in four or five days than the best known flight, which took eleven days. Therefore this journalist solved the matter by writing an amusing story about it, pointing out the impossibility of the bird's making the flight in that time. The next day it was proved that the whole thing was a hoax by a press agent and that the original note was a forgery. The deception was attempted without the knowledge of the "lost" naturalist, for the purpose of advertising some lectures.

Most of the newspapers of the country printed the story, giving the facts as reported by the police.

Comment.—Is it fantastic to desire effective legal remedies for such impositions?

CASE.—Not long ago a newspaper, published on the Pacific coast, used a full page to tell the public how a contemporary was pirating signed sport stories that the former had printed eight years previously. Apparently it proved its charge by photographic reproductions of the stories it had printed beside those that its neighbor was then featuring. At the same time, it definitely informed the public that the articles were not originally written by the boxing personage whose name topped them, but by its own sport editor. The latter information, needless to say, had not been given to the public eight years before.

Comment.—A case in which the original faker was treated to a dose of his own medicine and "squealed." *Editor and Publisher* commented thus:

Why this elaborate, yet transparent, deception is necessary to newspaper operation has never been explained. That the "signed articles" by sporting figures whose names are household words do make temporary circulation is certain; that the deception does the public no harm may be admitted; that the cost of such material when furnished by syndicates to a long list of newspapers is less than that of matter of genuine service to the public may be quite true. Yet, all of this admitted, in this busy world where gigantic stories crowd one another off page one, is it necessary for the newspaper to resort to petty lying to hold or gain a few hundred or a few thousand readers for thirty or sixty days?

Faking in the Interests of a Policy

Not the least reprehensible form of faking is that which is perpetrated subsequent to the writing of the story—an offense by the "higher-ups." Will Irwin, journalist and author, recently gave in *Collier's*, a typical example:

In 1920, I followed the Ruhr rebellion in Germany. At the insurgent headquarters near Essen, I associated with the correspondent for one of the most sound and conservative of London newspapers. We both remarked with amusement on the orderliness of the whole proceeding. Though these men professed to be tearing down the foundations of society, they did it, German fashion, according to rule. Except for the guards on the street, the searching parties looking for arms, the curfew regulations, life in Essen seemed to proceed much as usual.

One night two revolutionary soldiers did loot a shop. The shopkeeper complained. On the morning following, as I entered the City Hall to call on the revolutionary minister of war, I stumbled over the coffins of the two soldiers. They had been shot that morning. My friend the Briton wrote a two-column story about the atmosphere of Essen, wherein he described with some humor this anomaly of a German revolution. Two days later a copy of the newspaper containing his story arrived in Essen. The paragraphs describing the orderly conduct of the revolutionists had been cut out. In their place appeared a hair-raising account of communist atrocities in Essen. Had not the revolution collapsed a day or so later, he would have been expelled.

Comment.—An example from English journalism that unfortunately has its counterpart in America in cases in which violent coloring is equivalent to out-and-out faking.

The "Advance Story" Fake

No one questions the propriety of writing "advance stories" of approaching events provided publication is reserved until it is certain that the event takes place as described.

CASE.—A preliminary hearing in a murder case was to be held and the outcome was easy to foresee. A correspondent sent an advance story to his paper. The paper printed the story without waiting for a "release." The hearing was postponed.

Comment.—The taste that many people have for ridiculing newspapers was abundantly satisfied. The public resents being deceived even when there is no malicious intent.

Faking Pictures

Nothing is easier than to misrepresent by means of a camera.

CASE.—A famous woman returned from Europe. Newspaper photographers were at the pier. She left the boat heavily veiled. No pictures! But one photographer cut out the veiled face in the negative and substituted the woman's unveiled face from a photograph in the morgue.

Comment.—A fair sample of the exploits of "X-ray journalism."

CASE.—"As proof of an almost unbelievable state of barbarity in Mexico," a newspaper printed a picture from a photograph of seven children as they were being "driven into the water, forced to hold up their hands and be shot in the back. The tide carried their bodies away." An exposure of the fraud showed that the picture was merely of "children in bathing" and had been published as such in another newspaper some years previous.

Comment.—The newspaper asserted that it had been imposed upon. A similar case, however, in another paper under the same ownership, was the publication of a photograph said to have been taken in 1919, and alleged to show Japanese soldiers crucifying Koreans. The picture was afterwards identified as one taken in 1905 and showing the Korean method of punishing bandits. The purpose of the fake was said to have been to discredit Japan at the time of the Paris peace conference.

Near-faking

There have been instances of faking which most journalists place on the "permissible" side of the borderline between the true and the false. One such was the following:

CASE.—An Eastern newspaper printed a detailed account of the San Francisco earthquake and fire before anything more than the most meagre dispatches were being sent out from that

city. It was the good fortune of the paper to have on its staff a reporter who had formerly worked on a San Francisco paper and knew that city thoroughly. A ten-word message, therefore, saying that the fire had progressed to a certain street was easy for him to translate into graphic description. He knew the type of construction of the buildings in the different districts, he knew their occupancy, and he knew the landmarks that must have disappeared in the advance of the flames. He wrote a "color" story that was the marvel of his confreres in other offices.

Comment.—Obviously this is not in the same category with most improvisations. It had a broad basis of verified fact. Nevertheless, careful journalism might well take pains to present such stories in their true light and not as having been written at the scene of the event. An instance of what too often happens is given in the next example.

CASE.—A "Titanic extra" was put on the streets of New York about the moment that the steamer bearing those rescued from the Titanic was being warped alongside of her pier. The paper contained such "faked" description as the following:

Stunned by the terrific impact, the dazed passengers, many of them half-clad, rushed from their staterooms into the main saloon amid the crash of splintering steel, rending of plates and shattering of girders, while the boom of falling pinnacles of ice upon the broken deck of the great vessel added to the horror. In wild confusion men, women and children rushed about the saloons and cabins of the great steamship as though driven out of their senses. . . . In a wild, apparently ungovernable mob, they poured out of the saloons to witness one of the most appalling scenes possible to be seen. . . . For one hundred feet the bow was a shapeless mass of bent, broken and splintered steel and iron. . . . Then came the shudder of the riven hulk of the once magnificent steamship as she slid back from the shelving ice upon which she had driven and her bow settled deeply into the water. "We are lost! We are lost!" was the cry that rose from a hundred throats.

Comment.—The facts were that there was little shock in the collision with the iceberg; that there was practically no damage above the ship's water line; and that there was no panic. What a lesson in skepticism for newspaper readers!

The Rewrite Man

The usefulness of the rewrite man in the modern newspaper office, where speed demands that much important news be received in more or less fragmentary form over the telephone, is sufficiently vouched for by the size of his salary. But he presents a problem clearly recognized by careful journalists. Receiving, shortly before press time, a few meagre facts about an important fire just discovered in the suburbs, he writes a column lead from the standpoint of a close-up observer. If the story "reads just as if he had been there," and turns out to be fairly in accord with the facts, the long-distance reporter receives praise and, perhaps, a bonus.

Unless abuses of the system are studiously excluded, its hazards become a serious menace to newspaper credibility.

Press Association Denies Faking

The charge was recently made by a university lecturer that cable news is usually expanded from a few key words: "The cable news you read is not written on the other side, except in rare instances. The cost of cabling such lengthy accounts would be prohibitive. The news is sent in skeleton dispatches of from eight to ten lines and is expanded by the rewrite men into two columns of stuff."

Denial of this was made by a number of newspapers and press-handling agencies. The general manager of The Associated Press, Frederick Roy Martin, published an extended refutation of the charge from which the following are excerpts:

The statement that dispatches come in skeletonized form of a few lines and are then expanded to columns is a popular delusion of those who have not kept abreast of the modern development in intercommunication, cable, telegraphic and wireless.

So far as this organization is concerned there is practically no use of skeletonized or coded messages. The cable dispatches as received in the office are in plain text, without any coding. Coding represents loss of time at both ends, in coding and decoding, and will not do for news dispatches requiring promptness. Also there is no skeletonizing which would obscure the plain meaning.

The only omission is a few small words like "the," "and," etc., where the meaning is perfectly plain, and which in no way obscures the plain context of each sentence and line, and of the dispatch as a whole. Even the punctuation is indicated by the word "stop" in everything essential. There is no capitalization, as the cable brings the words in one unvarying form. One of the chief purposes of the editor is to supply this mechanical omission of capitals, and a few small words, and thus change the raw material into a finished product which will give a smooth running story, conforming rigorously to the cable text in all essentials.

Take, for example, the cable received on the first day of a recent month. The actual word count showed 10,119 words of cable and radio received in this office—about six or seven columns of ordinary newsprint. And this was in fact what we supplied the newspapers that day, the only additions to those 10,119 cable words being small words, capitalization, and smooth run of sentences and paragraphs to make a finished out-put.

Also, now and then, "dash matter" of a biographical or explanatory nature is given to make clear the text, but this is always given under a dash to indicate clearly it is not cable.

Similar in principle to the practice, when such practice exists, of faking cable news, is that of falsifying the route of the news. In the interests of apparent authenticity, the date line of a story is faked to misrepresent the point of origin of the news. The only acceptable excuse for this practice is that the reporter writing the story, or the person giving the story to a reporter, came directly from the place named in the date line. But really, why handle pitch at all?

A closely related form of faking is changing the date of news received by mail and printing it as telegraph matter.

The "Education" of a Newspaper Faker

Ralph Pulitzer has thus described the "Fake's Progress":

The philosophy of faking is worth your attention. The tendency to fake usually begins in some trivial story of a broadly humorous character in which the writer embroiders a comical situation with additionally ludicrous exaggerations which make no pretense to being anything but imaginative. You cannot lay your finger on anything definitely wrong about this story, since it gives its facts faithfully enough and brands its fiction so frankly that no one can be deceived.

The only thing wrong about it is that it is apt to be the first step to worse things. For the writer, congratulated on the brightness of this first story, will, possibly, on the next occasion, write a story equally funny, be equally frank in admitting it to be partly the fabrication of a comic fancy, but a story in which the facts and the fiction blend so together that the reader cannot be sure where the one ends and the other begins. Such a story has crossed the line which divides the enjoyable from the reprehensible. But they say it "does no one any harm" and is exceedingly droll, and a managing editor with a keen sense of humor is very eager to get out a bright paper, and so in it goes.

Now, the writer's next literary effort is apt to be one in which the humorous facts constitute the merest rudiments of the story, and the story itself as a work of comic fiction could stand unsupported, even if what few facts there were were removed. And still those responsible for that story's being in the paper may ask a critic what conceivable harm that story did any one. And at first you can't point to any one that it hurt. But a moment's thought will show you that while this story hurt no one that it was about, it did hurt several other persons and one institution. It injured the reporter who wrote it, the city editor to whom he reported it, the copy-reader who edited it, the managing editor who printed it and the newspaper which published it. It hurt these men by insidiously dulling the keen edge of their sense of accuracy, and it injured the paper by injuring them. For that particular reporter is now ripe to apply the same methods to writing a serious story about serious people and serious events, and instead of using his fancy for the broadening of humor we shall find him using his imagination for the heightening of tragedy, the deepening of pathos, the sharpening of the dramatic. And still on certain papers you will find the excuse that these stories "do no one any harm." And the men who make this excuse do not seem to realize that any harm has been done when the general public uses the term "newspaper story"—which should be a synonym for facts—as a euphemism for a lie.

The next step in this Fake's progress is the descent from embroidering untruths on a background of serious facts to fabricating a serious story out of the whole cloth without a single fact to base it on, but using real persons for characters. About on a level with this last perpetration is the cynical "stunt" which a very few papers encourage and a few have condoned where the reporter, if he cannot find that a good story has happened, actually hires people to make it happen, let us say to shoot up a saloon in a gang war that has grown lean of news, or to hang a prominent employer in effigy in some strike.

The last step of our reporter, now grown hopelessly irresponsible, unscrupulous and cynical, is a fake that bespatters some honest man's character, or besmirches some virtuous woman's reputation, which ruins spotless lives and leads innocent people to self-inflicted deaths. The reporter who has sunk to this depth of degradation might just as well be a murderer; in fact, there are a good many honest murderers whose boots he is unworthy to lick. But fortunately at this point the libel law, which might well have become effective considerably sooner, is very apt to take a hand in the game, and although our present criminal libel laws have been able to send all too few newspaper crooks to jail, yet heavy money damages are likely to visit a partial retribution on the offending paper, and when the pocket nerve, which is the nearest approach to a conscience which such a paper possesses, begins to ache, the reporter who lost this paper some of its money is apt to walk the plank. And there you have the whole progress, from the bright little flight of the imagination that was so laughable and harmless, down to the criminal piece of work that wrecked innocent lives, brought a rotten reporter to final ruin—and lost an unscrupulous paper a fraction of its ill-earned dividends.

An Evil Exposed Is an Evil Half Conquered

There is one good thing about faking—it is no secret! Many of those responsible for fakes have been unable to resist boasting of their exploits. Many others have suffered exposure.

"Faking as a Fine Art," was the heading of one typical confession printed in an American periodical and narrating the deeds of "the greatest newspaper faker in history" who for years "filled an eight-page Sunday feature section with stories having little foundation in fact." How much of this article was itself faked has not been divulged. The only ground on which systematic fraud of the sort described can be condoned is that it is not really fraud because the public has been deceived so much that it knows better than to believe anything it sees in the feature section of a Sunday paper. Rather low ground on which to try to build a substantial policy!

Even those who are none too optimistic about journalism must admit that as regards out-and-out faking the improvement in sentiment and practice in newspaper offices has been marked. Items like the following which appeared in the press dispatches one day in 1924 give evidence of a healthy condition:

The 17,000-ton floating cabaret ship reported to be anchored beyond the 12-mile limit off New York, and to have been the scene of hilarious drinking parties, was admitted to-day to be a myth.

The New York *Herald-Tribune*, which first printed the news concerning the imaginary ship in a copyrighted article, announced the discovery was a reporter's dream and that the reporter had been dismissed from the staff of the newspaper.

Use the imagination? Yes. As H. J. Haskell, of the Kansas City *Star* has put it, "The same sort of use of imagination that the great business man employs. It is imagination that shows where news is and makes it easy for the reporter to see the possibilities of a good story." But he adds, "no self-respecting newspaper can tolerate faking or misrepresentation on the part of members of its staff. Faking is precisely on a par with short weights and adulterated goods. Nothing can do more to injure a reporter than for his paper to learn that he is careless and unreliable. Deliberate faking is cause for discharge. Honesty is the governing policy in newspaper work."

CHAPTER III

TRUTH AND ITS ENEMIES, DISTORTION AND "COLOR"

Accuracy in the news has to do with details: truth, with those larger problems of selection and proportion and perspective which determine the general impression made on the reader. Accuracy is one means towards attaining truth, but it is a comparatively elementary matter, like correct grammar, while the other essentials to truth are often so difficult as to be baffling.

A photographer goes out to take a picture in a strike district. He can not get the whole district into one picture nor a dozen. His first problem is that of selection. If his sympathies lean either way in the conflict, he will need to guard against selecting subjects which give a distorted impression of the existing conditions.

If he goes deliberately about it, he can "make a case" for one side or the other without difficulty. Perhaps the workmen may be decently housed, but he can find at least one hovel to give the impression of squalor. Perhaps the strikers may be orderly, but he can find at least one thug to pose as a leader.

Even if he is free from prejudice, his judgment will often be at fault.

Similar to the problem of selection is that of emphasis. If in taking pictures of the crowd around the entrance to the industrial plant involved in the strike, the photographer poses policemen in the foreground, the impression is that of law and order triumphant. If a few angry strikers are in the foreground, and the police only slightly in evidence, the impression is that of impending trouble.

Even if he tries to be fair, our photographer will be able only to approximate the truth.

If to the difficulties of the photographer in getting a true picture of conditions as they exist at one point in time is added the

Herculean task of describing truthfully the progress of events and their present trend, taking into account the maze of causes and effects, the points at issue and the objectives sought, we have the situation as it confronts the reporter. Small wonder that, even with the most complete detachment from personal interest, he can tell only a part of the truth. Responsible journalism does its utmost to approximate the truth closely. Its reporters make an honest effort to discard bias. Its news editors are slow to change, either by selection of what is to be printed or by emphasis in the lead or the heading, the general impression sought to be conveyed by the man who writes of things he has seen.

Distortion of the News

The cynic has abundant grounds for his assertion that it is everybody's natural disposition to warp things in the telling. Partly it is sheer inability to see straight, partly it is the human instinct to tell as good a story as possible, partly it is the effect of prejudice. The appalling distortions of rumor are notorious. To "dispel rumor" was given as one of the purposes of the earliest newspapers. Even a dozen persons playing the "repetition game" can not transmit a statement from one end of the line to the other without distortion.

In a newspaper which is careless, or one which is unprincipled in its efforts to advance its owner's interests or its advertiser's interests or any other special interest—in such a newspaper the truth has little chance. It is so easily adulterated that the process lacks even the distinction of being clever. It is usually a simple matter of selection or of emphasis in lead, heading or position.

Distortion by Selection

It would be ludicrous to expect journalism to give a complete picture of world events or even a perfect record of the news in one city. Too many things are happening. The size of newspapers is already too great to fit the leisure of the reading public. Selection of what to print is a major activity in any newspaper office. In many offices much less matter can be

printed than must be discarded, even of the news actually brought to the desk by reporters, news associations, syndicates, and publicity agencies. And that which is actually brought to the desk is only a small fraction of the potential news matter waiting to be gathered.

When this task of selection is performed in the professional spirit, with an eye for the truly significant and a sense of social values and truth of impression, the newspaper is approximating its ideal as a vehicle of intelligence; when it is otherwise done the newspaper is guilty of unfairness and of misleading its readers.

CASE.—Two newspapers in a large city were on opposite sides of a fight over the police administration. The paper that was defending the police department officials printed an account of every arrest made, recoveries of stolen goods, and orders for greater diligence on the part of the police force. The lead of one lengthy article was as follows:

There is to be more vigor than ever instead of letting down. That was the information of police heads given to one hundred seventy-two men and women in the show-up at headquarters to-day.

The number in the show-up to-day probably was the largest in the history of the department. Those arrested ranged from ex-convicts to ordinary vagrants, caught in the police drive Saturday night and Sunday. . . . Two important arrests in the annual clean-up made by the police yesterday lead to the belief that the perpetrators of a score of robberies that have occurred this month will be apprehended.

The paper that was leading the attack on the police selected for its columns all the news it could find about infractions of law, even to printing a summary of thefts reported each day. "Bandits take heavy toll in week-end lootings," was the scare head over a list of fourteen cases of thievery, by no means a large number for such a city, but likely to impress the reader because such minor cases are usually entirely ignored as being too trivial to mention. One of its articles was headed, "Price on deserter but cops shun him," giving the impression of dereliction on the part of the police, whereas the story itself did not bear out the head.

Comment.—Perhaps those persons in the community who saw both papers were able to discover the truth concealed in the mass of contradictory facts, as a jury gets at the truth in conflicting testimony, but it seems a pity that some newspaper in that town did not make the discovery that by printing the news fairly it could make itself the one indispensable source of information.

CASE.—We have been carrying on a fight here to make the school board independent of the control of the city council. It has been a very bitter fight. Most of the newspapers have been taking the part of the council. One or two have been indifferent. We have vigorously championed the school board. A bill was introduced to give the school board a definite percentage of the total city tax revenue each year, thus ending all bickering as to what amount should be expended on public education and all the guerilla warfare over individual items in the school budget. There was a public hearing on the bill which developed into a most interesting and hotly waged debate. The newspapers opposed to the school board ran columns of the speeches of the opposition and one or two lines saying that the friends of the bill also spoke. We did not go quite that far but we did begin our story by quoting the speeches of the friends of the bill and then wound up with a half column of what we believed to be a fair summary of what the opponents attempted to state.

Comment.—An example of the almost universal unfairness—in greater or less degree—in selecting what to print about the "opposition." Few observers of newspapers, however, doubt that the better policy of giving both sides of a question in the news columns is gaining favor with editors under pressure of criticism. The amazing stupidity that seeks to build influence for a newspaper by destroying confidence in the newspaper's reliability is giving place to a better-reasoned policy.

CASE.—A reporter of the Jewish race employed on a large newspaper owned by a Jew covered the graduation exercises of a university having a large percentage of Jewish students. The principal speakers on the commencement occasion were of the same race. The reporter, by conscious or unconscious selection, built up an article having a decided Jewish bias,

beyond the requirements of the bare facts of the case. The city editor said: "This paper is owned by a Jew, but it is edited for the general reader. Take the color out of your news story."

Comment.—Unlike the preceding two cases, the coloring of this story began with the reporter, either as a result of personal bias or in the belief that he was pursuing an office policy. The reporter is human. As some one has said, it is difficult for him to write an unbiased report of an interview which ended with his being thrown down stairs. But the best reporter can come near it.

CASE.—A newspaper which favored the "sane" Fourth selected for publication all items regarding casualties from explosives and fireworks.

Comment.—In this instance there was no suppression of one side of the question in favor of the other side. The facts selected for publication were not controverted by other facts not selected. Fairness was not involved. The paper merely let the public know as much as possible about a situation. Support of a policy in this manner seems entirely equitable. Numberless instances of the kind might be recorded. A newspaper favoring the abolition of grade crossings on railroads printed every item it could get as to accidents at such crossings. Unfairness could hardly be charged on the ground that the paper did not print the opposing fact that many persons got across such crossings alive. Practically all newspapers have pet policies of this sort. Their reporters and correspondents are aware of them and act accordingly. Such policies are not to be mistaken for "sacred cows." They are perfectly proper objects of the newspaper's interest. The journalist who can not distinguish between promotion of this sort and advocacy in which unfairness is practised by selective suppression has too dull a discrimination to be a journalist.

CASE.—A newspaper started out to "make" a man politically. It selected for publication every item that could be written about the man's public activities and some that were of a personal nature calculated to build popularity.

Comment.—Such methods of "boosting" lead inevitably to the "manufacture" of news. Friends of other aspiring men will, in a case like this, be quick to note disproportion in

what pretends to be an unbiased reflection of the day's events. They sense the unfairness of it. A newspaper is safer in public esteem if it confines its advocacy of men largely to the editorial columns.

Distortion by Emphasis

The chief means of emphasizing a story in a newspaper are: by emphatic headings; by position in the page and in the paper; by amount of space given; by illustrations; by the use of wide measure, large body-type, extra leading. Through these means an item can be raised from obscurity to dominance, as is exemplified daily in the press of any large city. One paper treats a crime of some sort as a mere incident; another flashes it before the public at the top of the front page. That one editor's judgments of news values will differ radically from another's is inevitable. Such differences do not bring either man's procedure within the meaning of the word, distortion. The determining factor is the underlying purpose. If this is greater justice, more truth, larger social benefits, the emphasis or the subordination, as the case may be, is not to be questioned on ethical grounds.

CASE.—Shortly before a recent national election, a widely known political correspondent in Washington was commissioned by a number of newspapers to write a prophecy of the outcome, for publication on the eve of election day. He did so, prophesying a landslide for the Republican Candidate for President. Papers on both sides of the contest received the article.

The emphasis given in most cases was typical, that is, the Republican papers "played it up," the Democratic papers "played it down." One metropolitan paper, however, exemplified true professional standards, in accordance with its fine traditions. Though Democratic, it gave the discouraging article half the front page, a prominence which its authorship demanded. On the editorial page in the same issue it printed one of the strongest editorials of the campaign, favoring its candidate.

Comment.—A newspaper which resists the daily temptations to distort by emphasis, thereby demonstrating the ideal of strict separation of the news function of giving infor-

mation and the editorial function of interpretation and persuasion is a guaranty of better journalism.

CASE.—A great newspaper in a city of the Middle West has a conservative style of displaying the news. No black heads are used unless the news justifies their use. A mere glimpse at its front page tells the reader whether or not the day's news has anything in it of transcendent importance. Only an event of the first magnitude such as the death of a President or the beginning or end of a great war receives more than a one-column head. But the paper makes one kind of exception to its almost scientific grading of news importance. A story which supports one of its major policies receives as bold display as a dispatch covering an event of world-wide significance.

Comment.—The question involved is that of point of view. In the opinion of the newspaper referred to, a movement to promote river navigation in its territory is of more significance to its readers than a fire in Philadelphia, a ship subsidy bill, or a catastrophe in Japan.

From a world point of view this may not be true. But every newspaper, great and small, necessarily and properly puts home interests first. The consequent placing of emphasis seems not inconsistent with the requirements of fairness and truth. It goes almost without saying that an editor needs to know where to draw the line, that is, he needs to be a responsible journalist.

CASE.—Many newspapers consistently "play up" anti-social news. Most newspapers emphasize wealth and social prominence. All newspapers know that "the burning of a bridge is bigger news than the building of a bridge."

Comment.—Washington Gladden, the distinguished Ohio clergyman, has given a fine summary of the "great and worthy tasks of American journalism." Two paragraphs in it perfectly set forth the newspaper's responsibilities in these matters:

To hold the popular judgment firmly to the truth that character and manhood and not money and popularity are the central values of human existence, and:

To turn the thoughts of men more and more from the negative

virtue of detecting and exposing the evil to the positive virtue of discerning and praising the good.

"Coloring" News by Choice of Words

Tampering with the truth by means of words and phrases conveying innuendo is a common practice. It is also easy. Indeed, very few words are colorless, and an absolutely colorless statement of a fact is not always possible. Sticking to the cold facts is easiest for the writer with the largest working vocabulary, other things, such as sincerity of purpose, being equal.

CASE.—A report of a meeting of business women to object to the activities of the industrial court of Kansas as directed towards the regulation of women's employment was a colorless statement of the proceedings except as to the first word in the story. "Even the business women are objecting. . . ." was the opening of the lead.

Comment.—An example of innuendo which may not have been intentional.

CASE.—A woman testifying in her own defense in court was reported as "brazenly telling the jury. . . ."

Comment.—A clear implication that she was a shameless person and perhaps a perjurer. This method of coloring a story by the choice of adverbs or adjectives is as common as it is easy. Nothing but eternal vigilance by reporters and copy readers can prevent it. In some cases it is defended on the ground that the assertions are true. But careful distinction between facts and opinion usually transfers such words from the news columns to the editorial page. In the same category are a multitude of nouns utilized for innuendo, for example, the term "boss" as applied to a man who would be a "leader" if on the newspaper's side of the issue. The verbs also lend themselves to creating a false impression. We read that a man "under fire" of some sort slunk from the room, or perhaps, stalked or sauntered or strode or ambled or tottered, when as a matter of fact he merely walked.

Such criticism as the foregoing does not mean that description should be lifeless, but that it should be as true as it is vivid.

CASE.—In an account of a meeting addressed by a woman working for the "Labor Defense Fund," we are told that, "Several patrolmen appeared, but the meeting was not interrupted. The police had threatened a raid if she made seditious statements. But the speaker adroitly evaded illegal utterances. She spoke of the beautifully ideal conditions in Russia, and of trust-ridden America, but did not explicitly declare Russia should be taken as a model for America."

This reporter doubtless exercised considerable restraint. He refrained from telling the reader that the woman "evaded" any direct appeal for the assassination of the mayor and council, and that she "did not explicitly declare" that the women of America should be nationalized. Unfair reporting is a poor method of discouraging radicalism.

CASE.—A statesman explained that his authority did not cover a matter pressing for settlement. The reporter described him as "passing the buck."

Comment.—A figure of speech is an aid to graphic expression but sometimes contains unwarranted editorial connotations. "Grinds Out an Attack," "Waits at the Listening Post," "Shouts from Florida," are similar examples.

CASE.—The public was interested in the question as to whether or not a certain United States senator intended to be a candidate for re-election. One night, after a public meeting at which there had been four hours of speech-making, he was invited to a social affair. The report said:

Did the Senator plead weariness and the need for repose? He did not. He hastened to the jubilee, reaching the hall between one and two o'clock. He was hailed with acclaim by friends and made an impromptu address of felicitation for all present, and then joined heartily in the festivities. He shook hands warmly with the fathers, beamed upon the mothers, bestowed endearments upon babies in arms and bounced the children on his knee and romped with them.

But the thing that convinced politicians that he would fight to hold his seat in the Senate was the fact that he fox-trotted with several stout ladies, and was going strong at this at two-thirty.

Comment.—It is easy to guess where this newspaper stood; but the satire is good-natured and it would be hypercritical to object to the color in the story, though the presence of so

many children at an after-midnight frolic, even to oblige a candidate for the Senate, seems unwarranted.

The same can hardly be said of the following dispatch, almost identical in tone, but aimed at law enforcement and therefore hardly to be regarded as harmless:

So freely was whisky manufactured in Seltzer City, two miles from here, that police say even the cows and chickens were drunk from the mash dumped in numerous piles.

County detectives headed a raid in which stills were seized and liquor destroyed. No arrests were made, as so many were engaged in the manufacture of whisky that the Schuylkill county jail would not hold them. The officers also gave consideration to the plea of miners, who declare whisky is the only thing which cuts the mine dust out of their throats after a day's work, but the miners were warned that even for this purpose the whisky must be obtained on a doctor's prescription.

The largest manufacturer of illicit liquor was a widow with five children dependent upon her. She pleaded in vain with the officers not to take her still.

Quoting a Phantom Authority

Nothing is easier than to inject editorial color into a news story by quoting the opinions of "a well informed official," or "one who did not care to have his name used," or "most people who are in position to know the inside of the matter." A discriminating reader is not influenced by unidentified authorities nor by "undocumented" statements, but what proportion of readers is discriminating? There are, of course, instances in which highly significant statements can be given only by observing anonymity. It is desirable that they be received by the reader without skepticism. That is one of the reasons why a newspaper should refrain from a careless use of quotation marks or the dragging in of "the general belief."

Out-and-Out Opinion in the News

Few newspapers tolerate direct editorial utterance in the news column. They make a sharp distinction between "interpretation" and editorial opinion. It is difficult to appreciate the difference. In fact if either were to be countenanced, the less subtle would be the less objectionable because it would be

more easily detected by the reader. Artful coloring of the news—commonly known as “poison”—is intended to catch the reader off his guard, and usually succeeds. A paragraph of editorial comment stands openly for what it is, and the reader takes it for what he thinks it is worth.

CASE.—A report of a speech contained this paragraph:

The address, which was announced as one of “facts,” was made ridiculous by the retraction of one statement and the evasion of another.

A story about a police raid concluded with the statement:

Anarchy is the natural result of such high-handed methods of the police in arresting and bringing innocent victims into court.

Comment.—If a newspaper saw fit to print an editorial following or preceding a news article, no objection could be made on the ground of truth or fairness; but the utility of an editorial page would, of course, cease if the practice were carried to its logical limits.

Color in the Heads

Whatever may be said regarding editorializing in the news columns applies with as much force to the headings as to the stories themselves; indeed, with more force since readers in so great a proportion get their information largely from the headlines.

Excuse is made for the headlines on the ground that the mechanical difficulty of fitting words between inelastic column rules compels more regard for the length of a word, sometimes, than for its exact shade of meaning. The excuse is seldom more than an excuse—unless speed is to be accepted as the newspaper’s supreme aim, and the employment of uneducated copyreaders as a justifiable economy.

The Public Demand for Unadulterated News

It can not be too emphatically stated that charges of unfairness uttered against newspapers by persons who appear in the news can seldom be taken at their face value. A scrupulously uncolored report of a political meeting suits neither side. Ben-

jamin Franklin's test of an impartial newspaper was that both sides in a controversy condemn its reports as unfair. Nevertheless, the journalist who takes refuge behind this fact in defense of practices which his own conscience questions is not as honest as his profession requires. The public is often right in its criticisms. Its distrust of biased news is justified in too large a per cent of cases.

The Complaint Made by Labor Leaders

Perhaps in no field is the charge of news distortion so often made as in that of industrial controversy. The advocates of the interests of labor express entire lack of confidence in the verity of the news in what they denominate the "capitalistic press." Upton Sinclair's "Brass Check" is a voluminous mass of more or less convincing evidence from the "radical" standpoint. He has left it to others to point out similar unfairness by labor organs and socialistic newspapers. Responsible journalists do not contemptuously dismiss such charges without consideration. They recognize that journalism has no greater task than to give the public all the truth that can be found about conflicting interests underlying class antagonisms. The main hope of better social and economic conditions lies in a well-informed public opinion.

CASE.—A story was published in the entire press of the country to the effect that a patriotic parade in Centraia, Washington, had been attacked as it passed Labor headquarters, a bloody riot resulting. The facts as afterwards established seemed to be that the Labor headquarters were raided and the laborites beaten and shot.

Comment.—Those who speak from the standpoint of the labor organizations are usually emphatic in their charges that the press is negligent as to industrial reporting in ordinary times and that in times of conflict it distorts, colors, and suppresses the facts of the controversy. These charges are supported by much evidence. A case often referred to is that of the steel strike of 1919 covered in a report by a Commission of Inquiry of the Interchurch World Movement, entitled "Public Opinion and the Strike." This, perhaps the first study

of its kind, covers the issues of the Pittsburgh newspapers, and some outside papers, during the strike. Its conclusions are generally discreditable to the press as regards enterprise in getting the facts on both sides of the contest and fairness in handling them.

Whatever may be the merits of any particular case, the general indictment is strong enough to challenge the attention of all who honor American journalism and regard it as the indispensable organ of democracy.

Constructive suggestions from labor sources include that of an "industrial news department" in every large newspaper, in charge of a labor editor who must be a specialist in such matters, as much as the financial editor is a specialist in his field. A press association and a few newspapers have done something in this direction. A special news service established by labor interests has been patronized by a considerable number of papers.

The Views of a Capitalist

Though not bearing directly on the newspaper's handling of labor disputes, the following views are relevant and are fairly typical of those held by the public generally. J. Ogden Armour, of Armour and Company, packers, writing in *Leslie's* for December 25, 1920, said:

There is an opportunity to go wrong on almost any piece of news. And I take no exception to legitimate, unavoidable error. What I do take exception to is mixing the functions of the editorial page and news pages. And it is that mixing which to-day is going very far towards destroying the influence of the newspaper with thinking men, and giving to the unthinking public a vast amount of untruth.

Propaganda is an editorial, not a news function, and I do not care what kind of propaganda is put forward. Yet you may turn to almost any newspaper in the country and find that a fair number of the most important stories of the day are either colored in the text to suit the policy of the paper, or that the headlines, instead of telling the reader what the story is about, constitute an editorial comment on that story.

Take a very familiar instance. Suppose a man is called in an investigation—and in these days when investigations are epidemic nearly every man in business is at some time or other called to

testify before some committee or other. The object of the investigation is not always of importance—it is sometimes undertaken in order that the investigators may get their names into the newspapers in a larger way than is possible by the route of speeches from the legislative floor. A man is presumably called before the committee because the members think he has some knowledge of the subject which is being inquired into. The man in question may know nothing whatsoever about the subject. He may know as little about it as he knows of the style of hair-dressing most approved on Mars. He frankly tells the committee that he has no information. He categorically answers every question. Now, if a newspaper does not happen to like that man, does it say that he has no information and by his testimony clearly shows that he can have no information, and is therefore not in any way involved? If it is what is called a reputable as opposed to a yellow newspaper, it will give a correct abstract of the testimony, but it may put into the headlines: "Brown pleads ignorance," thereby conveying the innuendo that the witness is a skilful liar.

A yellow newspaper will not hesitate to present the whole story in innuendo and make more prominent some committeeman's gratuitous comment on the fact that the witness did not know than the actual testimony demonstrating that he could not, under any circumstance, possibly know. . . .

The function of the newspaper, then, as I take it, is first, to give people the news—to pipe the news from its source to the reader. Its second function is to advance civilization—that is, the well-being of the people. Certainly there must be a very considerable divergence of opinion on how this well-being is to be advanced. The place for expressing that difference of opinion is on the editorial page, or, following the French custom, by signed leaders that are frankly opinionated.

What I object to, and where I think too many newspapers avoid their responsibility, is printing opinion as news; for then they take away from the public that must depend upon the newspaper for the major part of its information, the basis for founding that independent opinion without which the best progress is impossible.

Articles That Are Properly Editorial

As has been said, no objection on the ground of unfairness can be made to printing in the news columns articles which are easily recognizable as editorial in nature. Under this head come dispatches from political correspondents in Washington or in state capitals and from staff correspondents sent out on special missions of investigation. In some cases foreign correspond-

ents have the privilege of "interpreting" the news they send. Practice in this regard is described with some dissatisfaction by an American correspondent stationed in the Far East:

I have heard a Chinese premier announce to assembled foreign correspondents that he intended to disband the excess Chinese army. Now, every man there knew he wouldn't do so because he was allied to the commanders of the excess army who used the excess to further their common political purposes.

Therefore every British correspondent either ignored the statement entirely or cabled it with the additional explanation that the premier wouldn't and couldn't carry it out, together with an analysis of the political situation that made it clear why. And every American correspondent cabled the statement just as it stood—except myself.

And when I argued with all of them that they were acting contrary to their common knowledge and common sense they replied: "But he said it, didn't he? If a premier says something, that's news, isn't it? What right have we to hold it up or editorialize?"

And I say that it isn't news, and that not only have we a right to ignore or explain it, even if that be editorializing, but we have also a duty to perform. That is what we are there for. Otherwise we are misinforming and misleading our readers, who aren't there to see for themselves. If a man is stationed abroad to represent a paper his commission cannot be construed as an abdication of his intelligence. I take it he is expected to use the judgment any sentient being would use in the circumstances.

That is the great point of disagreement between British and American newspaper traditions. We fail to distinguish between "editorializing" and "interpreting." The British expect a newspaper representative to act as a representative and to use his intelligence to interpret for the benefit of those who are not on the scene and do not know the background of "facts." They presume, of course, that the men are chosen because they are qualified to make interpretations. We don't. We limit our newspaper men to the functions of messenger boys.

It is obvious that opinion forms a necessary part of articles written for newspapers by syndicate writers or others not regularly on the staff of the paper.

"Interpretative" Coloring

Because of the favor it finds with some newspapermen, the theory that there is a way of interpreting the news without

objectionably coloring it should be presented. The following discussion of the subject from that angle is quoted from an address by Roy Howard, at the time, manager of the United Press Associations:

The news columns of practically every daily with a staff of clever men have interpolated in their stories a certain amount of deduction or point of view. . . . The question of the moment is not, "Is the paper's news colored? Of course it is. The question is, "How does the paper look at its news, look at its facts? From the point of view of the mass of people whose representative it is supposed to be? Or from the point of view of some private interests?" . . . We now recognize that it is possible to color news in a legitimate fashion as well as in an illegitimate fashion. Coloring a story does not mean dyeing it, but developing in it the facts which give it its own natural color.

For example, take the strike at Lawrence, Mass. The struggle had gone on for many weeks; children of the strikers were sickening from lack of proper food, clothing and warmth. As a strategic move in order to make possible their prolonging the struggle, the strikers arranged to send a number of these children to temporary homes which had been provided for them in nearby cities. On the morning that the children were to leave, the police stepped in and forcibly prevented the children's departure. Several hundred parents, many of them unable to understand the action of the officers, became greatly excited and started a small-sized riot when the police without explanation started to cart their children away to the poor farm.

A small army of newspaper men was on the scene, representing the press associations, the Boston, New York, and local newspapers.

Scarcely any two of these reporters saw that story in the same light. To some it was a riot in which a crowd of ignorant foreigners had attacked the officers of the law while the latter were in the performance of their duty. To others it was a high-handed usurpation of power, a violation of the constitutional rights of strikers who were seeking in a legitimate manner to protect their children. Some saw in it the thwarting of a cheap play for sympathy by the strike leaders willing to exploit the children. Others saw in the incident the arm of a powerful corporation reaching out through public officers whom it controlled, to hold within the battle lines the innocent victims of the struggle—the children.

Every story that went out of Lawrence was unconsciously colored, according to the point of view of the reporter.

But how was the reader to know the point of view of the reporter, or of the paper he happened to be reading? Since the situation at the Lawrence strike was extremely complex, should not the competent reporter have presented several points of view, not merely his own? If he could not ascertain the facts he could have given statements of alleged facts from both sides. It was difficult for the reporter not to write his own sympathies into his story. Yes, but not too difficult. It is being done every day. That is one reason why the trained reporter is a more trustworthy observer than the untrained man. Unless labeled, color is bound to be misleading. If labeled, it is not color.

As opposed to the view last quoted might be placed that of James Melvin Lee, author of a *History of American Journalism*:

The eyes of a good reporter should be like the lens of the ordinary camera. About the only choice opened to him is the selection of the spot where he wishes to stand to view a news event. The case is slightly different for the special writer. Such a person may appropriately use a ray filter and thus shut out things which ought not to be in a good news story. An account thus prepared should be distinctly labeled, "Personal Impression."

Editors' Views on Coloring the News

The following are excerpts from statements made by journalists in answer to the question, "Do you believe that editorializing or coloring the news is permissible?" They constitute a short symposium on the subject and are nearly enough in agreement to suggest that newspaper theory may be better than newspaper practice. The first and second statements are from publishers:

1. I do not know of any situation in which editorial coloring of straight news matter is justified. Veracity in news is like virtue in a woman—it is not a matter of percentages.

2. Every newspaper writer, consciously or unconsciously, colors his work by his interests and sympathies, and I have yet to find a newspaper reader who does not expect and want some of his news colored to meet his own particular interests and sympathies.

3. If by "color" you mean the misuse of editorial prerogative in

the news columns, that is simply amateur journalism, and there are plenty of examples in country weeklies and in a few big city dailies. On the third possible definition of "color" in newspaper work—namely, exaggeration and misrepresentation—this never is justifiable and is plain dishonesty. The old-time, personal journalism for which people occasionally sigh was far more highly colored than any we have to-day. Misrepresentation of any fact in a news report can not stand up longer than an average of six hours in the face of present day competitive news association reports and the numerous editions which every newspaper prints. But the so-called interpretative journalism, of which at least sixty per cent is "color," is growing more and more in popularity, because people want it and because it gives information which colorless journalism never will do.

The next three statements are from editors-in-chief:

4. You can take almost any news story and cut out sentences here and there and make it sound just the opposite from what was intended. This is the rankest kind of lying journalism and some of the most outwardly respectable looking papers do not hesitate to do it.

5. Misrepresentation is never justified. The ordinary run of news events can be reported, of course, as in any chronicle. But an important part of a newspaper's task has to do with events which must be explained and interpreted if the reader is to get a correct understanding of them. News does not come done up in packages. There is need of selection, of giving perspective. In cases, as I have said, where the significance of the events needs to be pointed out the good reporter must be an interpreter. Much of the value of Washington correspondence, for instance, lies in the interpretative reporting of events. The question of reporting always calls for honesty, sincerity and good judgment.

6. The *Times* rigidly observes a policy of barring editorial comment or policy bias from its news columns. It is our belief that not to do so inevitably leads to coloring the news to fit policies and even suppressing facts inimical to the paper's stand on public questions. It is fair to say, however, that this ruling can be applied only to pure news matter. Propaganda, of which every newspaper uses a considerable quantity, for worthy purposes or otherwise, must be of a semi-editorial nature to accomplish its purpose. The same remark applies in a measure to most feature stories.

From the managing editors of two city papers:

7. Naturally no editor has a right to editorialize in the news columns if he is printing a real newspaper. This should be a rule, I believe, in every newspaper office. However, as with all rules, there come times when a departure is justified. We had a situation, as you well know, during the war, especially in our big cities with heavy foreign-born population, when it appeared to me it was perfectly justifiable to editorialize or color, to a limited extent, some news stories.

On the other hand, in the discussion of great public questions or in political campaigns, coloring the news or editorializing in the news columns is absolutely unprincipled. Comment on the position of campaign speakers or on political activities by a newspaper, no matter what its partisan lines, should be confined to the editorial page or, if such comment is used outside of the editorial page, it should be clearly indicated that it is an editorial expression and not an attempt to cloak the editor's views under the guise of a news story.

I think it is possible to get editorializing out of the news and the headlines in nearly every instance. There is occasionally a news story for which it is hard to write headlines to avoid this; but it nearly always can be done.

8. There should be no partisanship in politics, no prejudice in religion, no hostility to organized labor, no antagonism to wealth *per se*, no color of personality, and, in fact, opinion should be barred from the report of every happening, every meeting, every public discussion, everything that goes to make up the daily grist of news. I say it should be; I admit that it is not. Would that it were, for if it were the days of the editor would be long in the land and his existence would be one perennial delight. The natural inquiry arises, "Why isn't it so if the man at the helm wants it to be so?" My answer is: human frailty and human infirmity.

The following epigrams bearing on the subject were uttered by an English publisher:

9. It is as wicked to doctor your news to suit your opinions as it is to doctor your opinions to suit your advertisers.

Let me compose a newspaper's headlines and I do not care who expresses its opinions.

It is not always decent or even profitable to imitate the worst vices of your most disreputable competitors.

From an editorial in the *Saturday Evening Post*:

10. There is much less doctoring of news and far less "writing under orders" in the daily press than many people suppose. True,

a great deal of newspaper writing is colored by the prepossessions of those who write and edit it; and so, for that matter, is nearly all writing. The fact is that only in rather exceptional cases does a prosperous newspaper have any motive for lying. As a rule, it is indifferent to the subject-matter of four-fifths of its contents. The professional sense supervenes. Interest in the thing itself becomes subordinate to interest in the manner of reporting it. If the composite intelligence that forms the mind of every live newspaper could be analyzed, no doubt it would be found that the paper would rather get a big news beat than elect its candidate for president. There is undoubtedly a certain subserviency to department stores—the largest advertisers; but usually all the department store wants is suppression of shoplifting items.

Group Judgments as to Coloring News

Under such headings as “impartiality,” “truth,” or “fairness,” the exclusion of editorial opinion from the news is recommended in almost all codes of ethics adopted by journalists.

From the canons of the American Society of Newspaper Editors:

Sound practice makes clear distinction between news reports and expressions of opinion. News reports should be free from opinion or bias of any kind. This rule does not apply to so-called special articles unmistakably devoted to advocacy or characterized by a signature authorizing the writer's own conclusions and interpretations.

From the Kansas Editorial Association's code:

We should not even by insinuation interpret as facts our conclusions.

A paragraph bearing on news distortion, from the Oregon code of ethics for journalism:

We will try to observe due proportion in the display of news to the end that inconsequential matter may not seem to take precedence in social importance over news of public significance.

From the code of the South Dakota Press Association:

News should be an uncolored report of all the vital facts accurately stated.

From statements issued by newspapers for the guidance of their reporters:

Keep your personal opinions, or the supposed opinions of the paper, out of your story. Stick to facts. Interpretation and comment belong in the editorial column.

Reports must not be colored to please a friend or wrong an enemy. Don't editorialize in the news columns. An accurate report is its own best editorial.

Too much encouragement may easily be drawn from the fact that usually when a publisher or editor or reporter defines the requirements of news he declares that it must be uncolored. Probably he is sincere; but unhappily he does not speak for the silent majority of his colleagues. Or rather, he speaks for their ideals rather than their practices. The temptation to distort the news and color the news is strong and it is constant, and the only immediate penalty for yielding is a bad conscience. Even that may submit to rationalization. But it is possible to sense other penalties for deception, suffered by the individual newspaper and by journalism. In no true sense is coloring the news good policy.

CHAPTER IV

THE RIGHT AND WRONG OF SUPPRESSION

In this chapter we are concerned with the question as to how the editor should treat requests for the suppression of news or editorial opinion.

Such requests are common enough. Not infrequently a newspaperman is heard to declare that they constitute the greatest problem with which publishers, editors, managing editors, city editors, and even reporters, have to struggle.

Sometimes no out-and-out requests are uttered, but the editor is keenly aware of the desire back of the silence, for the editor's intuitions are sharp from constant practice in sensing the attitude of people towards what he prints in the paper—sensing it in advance.

Suppression in a broad sense also includes such practices as ignoring a news source; blacklisting individuals; coloring news by selection, unavoidable in some degree; definitely excluding a type of news, as news of crime. It is also closely related to the larger question of printing the whole truth in a newspaper. It constitutes one phase of what is spoken of as the advertising influence. It is involved in the grave question as to how crime news may be handled in a constructive manner.

These different aspects of the subject are treated in their appropriate places in this book.

Evil Implication Not Justified

The phrase, suppression of the news, has an evil import to most minds, arising from the fact, no doubt, that the cases of suppression we hear most about are coupled with intimations of venality or graft on the part of the editor, or sinister influence by some powerful individual or group. Experience

with the problem, however, or even study of it from the outside, soon reveals that it has its laudable aspects as well as its evil ones. A veteran in journalism, looking back over his career, may very possibly take as great satisfaction in the remembrance of acts of news suppression as in those of fearless news publication or any other of his achievements.

The public says little regarding the newspapers' practice as to suppression, except when some portion of it protests at failure to eliminate the indecent, or another portion complains at failure to print adequate reports of some special interest. The general feeling of the public seems to be that people with influence can keep things out of the paper and that unimportant people cannot. Not many people nowadays believe that newspapers accept money to keep things out. Some prominent people call newspapers ruthless and profess to hate them. Our purpose is to get a broad view of this most complex matter and to discover the general direction of correct procedure.

Current Notions Regarding Suppression Are Exaggerated

It would be impossible for any one to say confidently how much newspaper material is being withheld from publication for some other reason than its inferiority of news value or lesser importance to the public. Only this can properly be called suppression.

One editor of a metropolitan daily ventures the opinion that, "suppression of news has come to be a topic of conversation largely because some persons have disagreed with newspapers about the relative importance of news. A committee organizes a political party and then complains that the newspapers suppress the news about it. The trouble is that the doings of the committee interest so few people that the editors do not feel justified in giving much space to them."

Moreover, if one looks at the reading matter in almost any issue of any newspaper, with the question in mind as to how much of it would have been suppressed if everybody's selfish interests or personal preferences had been considered, he will find plenty of evidence that remarkable independence is maintained by the press. It is printing the news without much

fear or favor. A view behind the scenes will, however, show him that this is not the whole story.

Papers Having Restricted Fields

The term "suppression" is not applicable to a well understood policy of a newspaper to "play down" or exclude entirely certain kinds of news. One widely read American newspaper, for example, has as one of its foundation policies the omission of news of crime. Its implied contract with the reader provides for absence of the negative or destructive element in the news. There is therefore no ground for complaint. Likewise a newspaper might omit financial news or sport news without being subject to any criticism, merely ceasing thereby to be a general newspaper and joining the class of specialized publications.

Divergent Theories as to Suppression

Interesting diversity of views as to the correct policy to be pursued with reference to suppression of news or opinion will be found by any one who makes investigation. As in almost any other matter of editorial policy, two widely divergent attitudes are taken by men of differing temperaments. At the one extreme is he who likes to have things settled once for all. Making a rule and sticking by it appeals to him as the simplest way. Sometimes he has been called the ritualist or the formalist though he is more than that. He is also a person possessed of courage and independence. He wants no dictation nor anything that resembles it. He has a generous measure of self sufficiency.

Print All the News

The following statement by a publisher in a small city is selected as presenting the point of view of this group. It states admirably the view commonly held by metropolitan journalists but not often found elsewhere:

The greatest service a newspaper can perform is to print the truth—and all the truth—to lay before its readers for their judgment all the facts of the day's developments, accurately stated and fully stated. The greatest weakness into which a newspaper can

fall is that of suppression; suppression brought about through obvious pressure, through less obvious blandishment, through the suggestion often honestly advanced that the printing of such and such news is not necessary or may do harm. It is through yielding to advances that a newspaper becomes discriminatory, unfair and unworthy. Print the news and print it all. This seems easy. It is not.

In our newspaper we print the news—all the news we know. We have no favorites. For a time this policy embarrassed us greatly. But we have it established. We are no longer asked to achieve delicate bits of suppression. Our friends don't ask it. Our advertisers don't ask it. Our enemies do not demand it. Our attitude is known and respected.

Not so very long ago a man prominent in our organization was arrested on the charge of driving an automobile while intoxicated. He is not a dissipated character, he is a man of standing, of family, of position, and of much value to us.

But we printed the news.

And another statement in like vein:

One of the most difficult problems the average editor must solve is the advisability of reporting, in detail, cases which come in police court—the petty misdemeanors, neighborhood quarrels, cases of intoxication, etc.

After considerable deliberation a few years ago we resolved to report these cases briefly, concisely and without any editorial opinion added in way of garnish. We adopted a policy that provides for pitiless publicity for every offender, no matter what race or color. If the man is "influential" in the community, well-to-do or well-connected, it makes no difference. We have decided that he shall have his "name in the paper" just as often as he gets into court—standing, in our estimation, side by side with the packing-house workman who buys lemon extract and then falls by the wayside.

Big city newspapers have no close communion with this problem, for the simple reason that the newspaper's staff is dissociated from the entire community. In a small city everybody knows the other fellow and the temptation is great sometimes to overlook the downfall of a friend. But newspapers cannot serve the public interest if they make fish of one delinquent and fowl of another.

"Don't Hurt Anybody's Feelings"

At the other extreme is the sentimentalist who shrinks from all the harsh edges of the editor's routine; he loves peace and

will pay any price for it—peace for himself and for the community. He is found in the small town, and he is a useful and popular citizen, but it is doubtful that his kind could render any great service to a larger community.

One of them expresses his creed as follows:

This paper never contains a line of unpleasant reading. That is one of the greatest things I do for the community. A newspaper that is bound to have all the news can turn a peaceful town into a bedlam. The people like my policy.

Or, in the words of a somewhat less thorough-going pronouncement:

I handle each case as it comes up, following a certain "woman's instinct" as to what is the right thing to do in a given case—I am beginning to think that the policy I follow is the wise one for communities like this. A newspaper man may be very cruel sometimes, if he permits his business to crush out all the native sympathies and friendships of life.

Or, as another editor says:

Almost any editor, if a man came to him offering a bribe, would kick the man out of his office, or try to do so. But when an old friend of the newspaper or the editor gets into trouble and comes to the editor begging him "not to put it in the paper" Roman virtues are needed.

And another:

I would rather lose the few dollars to be gained by "enterprise" that is based upon the suffering of the family of one who has gone wrong than to have the reputation for publishing rough-shod "scoops." Financially as well as humanly this policy has proved profitable in the thirty-five years that I have been editing newspapers.

"Use Discretion"

Somewhere between these two extremes is he who is doubtful as to the efficacy of rules—except the rule to settle each case on its merits. He accepts life as a complex matter and refuses to try to introduce simplicity and order and efficiency at the expense of justice. His sympathies are keen. He is

human. And he loves peace, but accepts trouble when necessary.

His theory on suppression will conform closely to the terms of the following written by an editor of many years' experience:

While it is true that the editor is the sole arbiter of what shall or shall not find a place in the columns of his paper, there are certain duties which he owes to his subscribers and other certain duties which he owes to the community in which he lives. It is the duty to the community which appeals with the greater force. Try as I may, I cannot get away from the belief that the country editor should be a leader in all that makes for the betterment of his community. Let each editor take counsel with himself as to why he is an editor, and on his conclusion depends the decision as to whether he should allow his personal sympathies to guide him in the matter of publishing unpleasant news.

If he has no higher object than to drift along with the current, seeking only a pleasant existence for himself, satisfied with the present and whatever it may bring, and with no thought for the people who must live in his community after he is gone, then he should choose the easiest way and see to it that nothing enters his columns that will give offense to anyone. But if he wants his community to be better for his having lived in it, if he has vision enough to look ahead and realize that future generations must live in the community whose destinies he helps to shape, then he should remember that the suppression of certain news may lead to conditions under which he would not wish his children to live. Preserving silence may be an easy way to shirk an unpleasant duty, but future generations may pay the penalty, may yield to the temptations which that silence has helped to place in their way.

And as another publisher in a small city states the matter:

Our paper got away from its biggest editorial problem about a year ago when we realized that our greatest number of "kicks"—and a "kick" means an enemy of the paper—came as a result of our playing up petty police court cases and divorce proceedings. We changed our policy, quit handling cases of intoxication except where there was disturbance of the peace, omitted the names of youthful offenders in most cases, and gave only brief mention of divorce cases.

The Arguments Used

Most of the pressure for suppression centers on the news department, though editorial treatment of certain subjects inim-

ical to the interests of important individuals or groups is often the subject of protest.

It is not alone at the editorial desk, however, that suppressive influences are brought to bear, though this is the scene of most battles over cases of major importance. All along the line of gathering, handling, and presenting the news, the paper's policies as to exclusion or emphasis are effective. Reporters quickly get the "feel" of the office and are governed by it.

The advertising columns are affected beneficially by more and more insistent demands that untruthful and offensive copy be kept out. They are sometimes the center of controversy as to the right of the "opposition party" to buy space therein.

Urging Suppression

Among the reasons given for asking that news be withheld from publication are some of doubtful propriety or plausibility and some which may be accepted as convincing. Some of the more familiar and interesting reasons are:

That the withholding of an item about a misdemeanor would constitute a threat calculated to prevent further offenses by the same person.

That the publication of the item would hurt the business of the person concerned.

That the item of news would hurt the town.

That publication of the item would hurt the business of the editor.

That suppression of the item would be a favor to the editor's friends and in line with his social obligations.

That suppression of the truth about an incident would be proper because of the paper's previous acceptance of a formal statement, though untrue, as covering the case.

That the item refers to a first offense.

That the item relates to a juvenile offender.

That sympathy for parents justifies the suppression.

That suppression would promote peace in the community.

That suppression would avoid embarrassment of innocent persons.

That the paper is not sure of all the facts.

That the matter is a delicate one involving affairs of state or similar public matters.

- That the item involves the reputation of a woman or a girl.
- That the story looks like propaganda.
- That the story was obtained in confidence.
- That the story is morbid in tone and content.
- That the item is to be regarded as free publicity.

Venality may be disregarded as being beyond the pale of discussion. Court decisions have determined that, "It is not only unethical, but it is unlawful, for a publisher to accept a consideration for refraining from publishing comments on individuals or companies, irrespective of the question of the character of the comments intended to be suppressed. Any such contract is invalid as contrary to public policy on the ground that agreements for consideration by a newspaper to sell its right of free and unrestricted comment are reprehensible in the highest degree."

Favoring Full Publicity

Among the obvious reasons against suppression, the following are to be regarded seriously:

That the newspaper has an implied contract with the public to give complete information of the day's events.

That omission is one way of telling an untruth.

That suppression gives rise to rumors while publication of the facts protects the public against anxieties growing out of baseless reports.

That the news can be published with substantial fairness to all concerned and with better results than to attempt to favor certain ones through suppression.

That by refusing to suppress news, a newspaper demonstrates its independence.

That the knowledge that publicity may be "a part of the penalty" will act as a wholesome deterrent from wrong doing.

Typical Cases

"Don't Scare the People"

An argument for suppression that is met by large and small newspapers alike is that publication of the news in question would disturb the community's peace of mind.

CASE.—Information came to a newspaper in a city having one paper that the water supply of the city was menaced by typhoid contagion. Officials and prominent citizens earnestly requested the newspaper to refrain from "scaring the people." It was represented that the officials were doing their utmost to remedy the evil, and that there was no need to create general alarm. The news was suppressed.

Comment.—In this particular case an epidemic came and the death list was large. The editor afterwards expressed the opinion that, "to have scared the people would have been to keep the faith and save life." But regardless of the eventualities in this case, it seems clear that suppression was the wrong policy. Fear is often salutary. There were precautions the people could have taken against infection if they had appreciated the danger. They had a right to the facts on which to base a judgment as to whether or not some city official or employee had been derelict in duty. Perhaps an intelligent public opinion, fully informed by the newspaper, could have brought about improvement in the water-supply system.

"Don't Hurt the Town"

Among the most difficult tasks of an editor is to decide what to print and what to suppress in the way of unpleasant facts about the town or city. No performance by a newspaper requires more courage than telling the truth, perhaps the whole truth, in such a matter.

CASE.—A newspaper in a large city was convinced that vice conditions were the worst in the city's history. It had evidence of collusion between the underworld and the police. It believed that nothing but an aroused public sentiment could force officials and judges to enforce the law or at least maintain a maximum of restriction. But it was argued that advertisement of the wickedness of a town prejudices desirable non-residents against it while attracting an element that only intensifies the evil. Also that news of vice is not fit reading matter for the home.

The paper decided upon a vigorous campaign to enforce a "clean up." It centered the attack upon the chief of police; published much sensational evidence of evil conditions, in-

cluding addresses of illegal resorts and stories of personal observations by reporters, and many photographs.

Comment.—While it is true that a case such as this is so complex a matter that the results of any line of action in one instance cannot be regarded as determining the correct line of action in another, yet, in general, the main elements of the problem are the same in any American city. It is hard to see the point in condemning periodic "clean up" campaigns. Neither of the other alternatives of paying no attention to the matter or making the campaign perpetual seems to recommend itself. Progress, social, political, or otherwise, is not the result of steady pressing forward but of periodic advances with more or less loss of ground between. The choice of a definite point of attack has great strategic advantages, but the matter published seems to have been unduly sensational. Vice may be effectively described in general terms, though lacking the vividness of concrete cases. Vividness should here be sacrificed to good taste.

CASE.—Smallpox was prevalent in the city. It was a large city drawing trade from a wide section. The papers were urged to say nothing about the epidemic in order that outside buyers might not be deterred from coming to trade.

Two papers did as requested. The third paper, and the one with the largest circulation, printed daily reports from the health authorities as to number of cases, deaths, precautionary measures. Front page position was usually given, but headlines were never sensational.

Comment.—Some of the advertisers and other merchants who at first condemned the printing of the news came to realize that it was better for the business of the city, as well as its health, that rumors should be kept down by the daily publication of authoritative news on the smallpox situation.

In such a case no newspaper could experience any difficulty in recognizing the clear line of its duty to the public which was fulfilled only when it had printed this news of great public concern. On the other hand, its duty to its advertisers was ended when it printed their advertising according to contract. The fact, however, that the line of duty was plain did not make it an easy matter to accept the possible financial losses. Only a theorist can smile with contempt or grow red with

indignation at the editor who compromises with his ideals in the face of what appears to threaten financial embarrassment. The situation is not easy. However, just as it seems fair to say that a man should not open an amusement place unless he is prepared to take losses from bad weather and smallpox epidemics, so it is to be expected of the man who presumes to serve the public as an editor that he has discounted in advance considerable losses sure to follow the conscientious observance of the rights of the public to all the news that is for the public good.

CASE.—A newspaper was accused of giving its town a "black eye" because it campaigned against objectionable conditions.

Comment.—It replied that the city already had the black eyes. "It's the talking about them that raises the scandalized protest. It's easy to see why. It's because when a public interest is insisted upon a private interest is hit. Demand efficient municipal government and political interests get a black eye. Insist that the boulevards be protected and commercial interests get a black eye. These are the eyes that are being protected—not the city's."

"Don't Hurt Business"

While the advertising influence is treated elsewhere, a case or two from that general direction may be included here.

CASE.—Some weeks before Christmas in a period of hard times and manifold demands for money in support of public enterprises, a newspaper published a number of interviews with prominent women of the town declaring that these women were going to confine the giving of Christmas presents to members of their own families and make the presents simple and inexpensive. The paper received vigorous protests from its advertisers and demands that articles which would discourage Christmas shopping be not published.

The paper ceased the publication of the interviews.

Comment.—It is not clear that publication was justified by any duty to the public. The interviews were not news in the strict sense. They were opinions of people in the community. If the paper held the same opinions, it had a right, of course,

to print not only interviews but editorials on the subject. If it held contrary opinions it could print the interviews and at the same time dissent editorially from the views expressed. But it is difficult to see that the paper sacrificed anything of its independence in discontinuing the publication of the interviews on the ground that the matter was one of individual concern and not public concern.

CASE.—During the war a reporter discovered by chance a group of very rich men in a fashionable hotel carrying on a sort of lottery, with the "pot" composed of Liberty Bonds. It was a "corking story" as showing how the rich were fiddling while the boys died in the trenches, and how rank violation of the gambling laws was going on. The information was put before the city editor of a metropolitan daily. Everything was there, including names. The city editor decided not to run the story.

Comment.—Not necessarily a demonstration of the difference in treatment accorded the rich and the poor. The absence of arrests in the case may have been the deciding factor. If not used in the paper, however, the evidence might well have been turned over to the authorities.

"Don't Antagonize Your Friends"

There is an interesting diversity of opinion as to how popular an editor ought to expect to be.

CASE.—An officer of a bank was involved in a scandal brought to light through a divorce suit. Another officer of the bank who was a close friend of the editor of the local paper asked him to suppress the story. The editor refused.

Comment.—The case was somewhat simplified by the fact that papers in a neighboring city had already printed the story. There was no point in suppressing it locally. It would simply have occasioned remark that the paper was "owned by the bank." Nevertheless, deep offense was taken by the man making the request, and not until years afterward did he admit that the editor had been right.

CASE.—The editor's family had accepted an invitation to dine with friends. Two days before the dinner the brother

of the lady who was to be their hostess was indicted by grand jury for misuse of public funds. The lady asked as a personal favor that no sensational story, if any story at all, be printed. She regarded her brother as innocent and was sure that the money was safe and would be paid at the proper time. The front page of the paper was already made up, with a banner heading on the story, a two-column cut, and a ten-point lead. Should the editor (1) tone down the display and print only the bare facts of the story, (2) let the page "ride," sending regrets for the dinner, or (3) let it ride and go to the dinner as if nothing had happened?

The second course of action was chosen.

Comment.—The public had a right to the facts in the case when it became a matter of record in the proceedings of the grand jury. No sense of duty compelled the sensational treatment of the story, however. It was a dramatic story and the editor "played" it. If the editor had been willing to modify his sense of the news value of the story out of consideration for the feelings of his friends, he would hardly have been derelict in duty. He chose to get the utmost returns in reader interest through sensational handling. It seems fitting that he should relinquish his claim to the hospitality offered.

This raises the much discussed question as to whether or not an editor should have friends. Can he be faithful to his responsibilities as an editor and maintain friendships? A few great editors have answered in the negative. A man of wide observation put the matter in epigrammatic form: "A newspaper's friends are its liabilities; its enemies are its assets." Certainly the editor's friends can not be chosen from among those whose interests are likely to conflict with the public interest.

In the words of one careful editor: "I have quite come to the conclusion, after twenty-five years in the newspaper business, that the directing editorial chief of the paper must make up his mind to have very few friends. The fewer he has the better it is for the newspaper and the more independent he becomes." Such expressions come usually from editors of city papers. Country editors seem to find it less necessary to beware of friendships.

"Have Sympathy"

The plea for suppression on this ground has many angles. Sometimes it is sympathy for individuals mentioned in the story, sometimes for their relatives or friends. Sometimes the basis of the request is the youthfulness of the offender, sometimes it is the fact that the offense is his first one and likely to be his last, if he is given a chance to save his good name. Sometimes the story relates to no offense against the law but to some humiliating or compromising or embarrassing incident.

The discussion of the influence of publicity as a deterrent of crime, the theory that publicity is a part of the punishment, is handled in the chapter devoted to antisocial news. The validity of the sympathy plea for suppression need be considered only briefly here. To say that a newspaper should be as inexorable as a law of nature; that whatever Providence allows to happen may properly be recorded by the press; or even that everybody must be treated alike, is to lay down for the editor a different policy from that which we are wont to acclaim in other departments of life. We approve the exercise of clemency in special cases. We may be told that President Lincoln's pardon of a soldier condemned to be shot for having slept while on guard was liable to weaken discipline and expose a whole army to disaster through similar derelictions by men doing sentry duty, but we read his historic letter to the young man's mother and commend his merciful act. Life is not yet a simple matter of obeying rules. Until it becomes so we shall continue to applaud judicial sympathy and executive clemency, and we shall approve of the editor who, having a general policy to give the public all the news and having sufficient courage to follow that policy unwaveringly, yet makes exceptions to the rules in cases that appeal to his sympathies without at the same time presenting overbalancing considerations of the public good.

CASE.—A prominent man in a large city was found dead in a downtown hotel. The coroner's verdict was acute alcoholism. He had a wife and several daughters who would be em-

barrassed if the cause of death were given. Did the paper owe it to other men to print what might serve as a warning against intemperance? If the man had not been prominent would the question have arisen at all?

It was determined not to print the alcoholism angle of the story. Upon request, the coroner changed the verdict to heart disease. Instructions were given the desk that in all cases of death, good judgment and humanitarianism should be exercised, even though it were necessary to omit facts.

Comment.—Publication of the details to satisfy the morbid curiosity of some newspaper readers would undoubtedly have been unjustifiable. If the case had no real bearing on a question of public policy, of law and order, the newspaper's handling of it was doubtless correct. The argument that the original verdict would have been printed in the case of an unimportant citizen contains the fallacy that publicity for the fact in the two cases would have caused equal embarrassment, which was probably not true. At all events, the safe rule, "when in doubt, don't print," tends to justify the decision.

CASE.—The city editor received notice of the death of the small daughter of a well-known family. Inquiry developed the fact that the child had attempted to crawl off its bed and in falling caught its head between the bars of the bed and had been strangled. The nurse found the dead child and called the father. The mother was ill. The father urged that the manner of the baby's death be not described since it was important that the mother be kept ignorant of it as long as possible.

The request was refused on the ground that the paper owed it to parents of small children to let them know that such an accident could happen.

Comment.—The paper seems to have been in the wrong. The editor might well have sent a reporter to investigate the manner of the accident and to find out whether beds of the same sort were for sale in the town. If the facts seemed to warrant, he could have run a story containing the warning without reference to the local accident.

CASE.—A prominent citizen went to the editor of the local paper with the request that nothing be said regarding the engagement of his daughter to a man who had lived in the city some years but had recently been arrested in another town

on the charge of having two wives. He said the girl was ill as a result of the shock of the disclosures; that she had been an exemplary girl, but injudicious, perhaps, in accepting the attentions of the man.

The editor felt it his duty to print the facts in the case, withholding the name of the girl.

Comment.—The newspaper is under obligation to acquaint people with the variety of ways in which they may incur trouble, but this may be done abundantly without the use of local examples causing pain to individuals who may be comparatively innocent, when the local case is, as in the present instance, one of a private nature, and is not a subject of court proceedings. Suppression of the name, merely, probably afforded little protection to the young woman in the case since everybody's curiosity is excited into activity by a "no name" story.

Somewhat different was the case in which an editor was requested to keep an engagement announcement out of the paper because it would be a shock to the "other girl" to whom the man was engaged—and she had a bad heart anyway.

CASE.—A girl lured away by a man and arrested as immoral was a relative of one of the city's richest men. If the item was not used, the inference of those who knew about the case would be that influence or fear was the cause. As a matter of fact, those concerned made no request in the case, even after the court placed the girl on probation. The problem was handled from the girl's standpoint alone. The court gave her a chance which would have been useless had publicity resulted. For her sake, the item was omitted. Not even thanks came from her family; a certain portion of the public declared influence hushed up the matter—but the after life of the girl justified the consideration given her.

Comment.—Instances in which girls are attacked, or commit some indiscretion, present the same problem. Newspaper policy usually protects such as long as there is any chance that the protection will serve any good purpose.

CASE.—The police made a raid on a hotel and in one of the rooms found three men with a plentiful supply of liquor. One of the men was a dentist. Evidence was introduced in court the next morning to the effect that the dentist had been called

to the room by telephone to relieve the sufferings of one of the other men who, in spite of the whisky, or because of it, had a toothache. He was released and the paper was asked not to print his name because of the injury to him professionally and socially.

The name was left out of the story.

Comment.—The editor knew that few readers of the paper would believe the dentist's story. He did not believe it. But he was not absolutely sure that it was untrue. Rather than take a chance of injuring an innocent man, he suppressed the name.

CASE.—A young business man was arrested in a neighboring town and fined for drunkenness. He returned home and begged the editor to withhold the story. He had borne a good reputation and was succeeding well in his first business venture. He assured the editor that he would never get drunk again.

The story was withheld.

Comment.—The editor embraced an opportunity to hold his newspaper as a disciplinary club over the head of a first offender. Few memories give an editor more satisfaction than those of the instances in which he took pity on youthful or other first offenders.

However, there should be a definite limit to the editor's forbearance. As one nationally known editor of a small city daily, William Allen White, puts it:

The man who fills up with whisky and goes about making a fool of himself becomes a public nuisance. If permitted to continue it he becomes a public charge. The public has an interest in him. Publicity is one of the things that keeps him straight. His first offense is ignored in our paper, but his second offense is recorded when he is arrested, and no matter how high or how low he is, his name goes with it. We have printed this warning to drinkers time and again; so when they come around asking us to think of their wives and children, or their sick mothers or poor fathers, we always tell them to remember that they had fair warning, and if their fathers and mothers and wives and children are nothing to them before taking, they are nothing to us after taking. The bum is treated always from the standpoint of the community interest.

Strikingly similar is the policy enunciated by a metropolitan daily:

Minor news of first offenses is always to be played down and is kept out entirely for good cause shown at any time. The question to ask is: Has this particular case any relation to the public welfare? If it has, print it; if it has not, why give some young fool, or some person who slipped, a handicap for life? Public curiosity and public welfare are not synonymous.

CASE.—A youngster, one of three brothers, was arrested for the theft of an automobile, convicted, and sentenced to six months in jail. He had been arrested for bootlegging, and minor offenses, and had been suspected by the police of serious crimes such as an oil station robbery. He was the only black sheep in the family.

The boy's father was a judge of a local court, of good standing and long service to his community as a lawyer. A man of about seventy years, as fine as could be found. The trouble of his son almost caused a breakdown for the father, who considered resigning his place if the story was printed. The father was only moderately well-to-do and needed his salary to support himself and wife.

The boy's mother was an invalid, whose life was tied up with her children. She knew nothing of the youngest boy's troubles. News of her son's disgrace would probably cause her death. She read the newspaper daily.

One of the other two newspapers in the city agreed not to print the item. The other was noncommittal.

The story was suppressed.

Comment.—Possibly a commendable exception to the rule.

CASE.—A superintendent of a Rescue Mission, a widely known evangelist, was sued by his wife for separate maintenance, among her charges being the allegation that he was the father of a child born to his secretary at the Mission. Two of the seven members of the Mission board believed the charges and urged a local newspaper to take up the case even before it came into court. The editors considered the fact that the Mission had been a fine thing in the city and that many persons had pinned their faith to its superintendent; also that the usefulness of the superintendent would be ended, however innocent he might be, unless all the facts could be presented at one

time; also that such a case of scandal would do no good to the men, women, and children of the city.

The paper printed nothing until the trial and then only conservative items—this in spite of the fact that sensational outside newspapers “played up” the case and gained local subscribers thereby. The decision of the court was a complete vindication of the superintendent who was granted a divorce from his insanely jealous wife. The local paper printed the decision in full, devoting several pages to a complete exposition of the case.

Comment.—An instance of courageous suppression that should put to shame the apologists for the principle of giving the public what it wants.

“It Is a Delicate Matter”

The newspaper’s responsibilities in respect to affairs of state and particularly in matters affecting international relations are discussed elsewhere. Similar “affairs of state” on a smaller scale are encountered in even the four-page-weekly town. Beneath all the petty disagreements as to the propriety of printing this kind of news is a fundamental difference of feeling towards the public and public opinion. Some people seem to be naturally secretive and suspicious. They like to work under cover. Their acts may be wise and unselfish but they do not wish them known. They instinctively distrust the people. The thought that matters which they have in hand should be discussed in the community is repugnant. Other human beings are more communicative. They can see no reason why democracy should not mean a general sharing in knowledge of public affairs. They think of secret proceedings by publicly constituted bodies as a bad tradition, growing out of an unhappy fear of the mass of the people. “Let the public know each step in the process,” they urge, “let them talk about it, and bring pressure to bear, and hold indignation meetings or ratification meetings, as the case may be. The people will make mistakes but in the long run their rule will be the best rule.”

In such cases it seems as though the benefit of the doubt should be given to the many rather than to the few; that secrecy should be the last resort; that the newspaper can not

fall in with the human but dangerous theory that the few who are entrusted with responsibility must not be hampered by referendums; that publicity is not a part of the game.

CASE.—The board of education of a small city had some difficulty in selecting a school superintendent. At one meeting a tie vote was recorded in favor of re-employing the superintendent of the year before. At the next meeting one member was absent and the motion to reemploy was carried. Another meeting was to be held soon with the prospect that a motion to reconsider would be made. The newspapers were urged to suppress the story on the ground that the situation was embarrassing to the superintendent and that there really was no story until the question should be finally disposed of. "At least give the superintendent time to hunt another job," was the plea.

The paper held out the story.

Comment.—Every step of the proceedings was of public interest and should have been printed. There had been ample time, before any meetings were held, for the friends of the superintendent to tell him of impending opposition. His opportunity to hunt a new job was then open. Moreover, it is doubtful that suppression by the paper kept the facts from a single person in the community—for a very great length of time—or that any school board in any other city, considering the superintendent's employment, failed to ascertain the facts. Besides, there was a crop of rumors started that would have been far less rank of growth if full publicity had been afforded from the first. Finally, public opinion had a right to expression on such a question.

CASE.—A telegraph story was sent to a large number of newspapers giving the results of an inquiry among married women as to their attitude towards marriage. As one editor viewed it, its effect was in the direction of discontent and cynicism. He killed the story.

Comment.—"Don't upset people needlessly," is not a bad principle.

CASE.—A member of a state legislature in a "dry" state was arrested while drunk and disorderly, but released when his

identity became known in order to save a scandal among his rural constituents. The local papers, however, refused to suppress the story. Three days later the man committed suicide. Indignant citizens accused the papers of "murder."

Comment.—A borderline case in which the fact that the man had a good reputation at home and was induced to go on the drunken spree by "friendly lobbyists" who escaped arrest, was offset by his responsibilities as a public official, the newspaper's duty to expose demoralizing conditions in the state capital, and the probability that rumor would do more damage to his reputation than publicity in the press.

CASE.—A newspaper received a bundle of compromising letters written by a prominent candidate for office. It published the fact that such letters were in existence. The candidate denied the charge. The letters were then printed in the paper.

Comment.—A case in which a newspaper felt justified in acting as judge, jury, and executioner—gruesome business at best. The troublesome ethical questions involved in such cases are: as to the justifiable methods, if any, by which a newspaper may acquire private letters; and the conditions warranting, legally and ethically, the publication of such correspondence. Digging up a man's past is a ghoulisn occupation whether done for amusement or for the sake of duty. Some of the pathetic tragedies of real life, as well as of fiction, have grown out of the answer to the problem. Protection of a public interest undoubtedly affords the best excuse for courageous cruelty.

"Don't Violate a Confidence"

Suppression of news received in confidence is a matter in which considerable variance exists between theory and practice. The theory is admirable. Not only journalists but statesmen, speaking after dinner, laud the scrupulous care with which newspapermen hold inviolate confidential information. And it is all true, but it is not the whole truth. The fact is that newspapers are so often imposed upon in such cases as to discourage idealistic notions. Just as, under certain circumstances, men offer evidence in court in exchange for immunity, so they seek to trade confidential news in exchange for

protection from publicity. Many revelations labeled as confidential are in fact not at all exclusive; may be likely any day to reach other newspapers. In some cases the public has a clear right to the information. And so it is not strange that newspapers sometimes evade the restrictions of a confidence—without damage to their consciences.

CASE.—A correspondent at the state capitol obtained a story in confidence. He was afraid it would “leak” to the other papers. He wrote it under a date line from the other end of the state, injecting, “according to reliable information from the state capitol,” and attaching a note to the state editor explaining the situation. It was printed.

CASE.—A reporter got a tip in confidence that a grand jury was to be called.

He reported to the city editor that the prosecutor had given him the information in confidence. Acting on the tip, the city editor was able to get the information from another source. He then printed it.

Comment.—The standing rule in newspaper offices to respect confidence is good policy as well as good ethics. Evasion as in these cases, or deception, can be justified only by the motive—the end. But reporters may well be cautioned against making any promises of suppression for their paper. The man higher up is the only judge in such cases.

Observance of a release date on a story comes to mind in this connection but is hardly to be regarded as a matter of withholding news. It is a mere matter of contract between the paper and the source of the news—contract explicitly stated or implied in universal newspaper practice and seldom violated.

“Don’t Be a Tool”

A newspaper may be “used” sometimes in giving publicity to a story, sometimes in withholding it. All kinds of people try to use the newspaper to punish their private enemies or to promote their private interests. When known, they lose popularity with the editor.

CASE.—The day before an automobile show was to open in a large city, a resolution was introduced into the city council calling for searching investigation by the fire, police, and building committees into the conditions at the exhibition hall. Speeches were made on the necessity for safety precautions of all kinds. The horrors of a recent disaster in another city were graphically painted. But the reporters knew that the whole rumpus grew out of what the members of the council regarded as a niggardly allowance to them of complimentary tickets. By frightening people away from the show, they hoped to make the management of the hall "come across."

No paper printed a word of the story.

Comment.—An excellent example of salutary suppression.

"Don't Add Fuel to a Bad Fire"

No greater responsibility rests on a newspaper than that of helping to maintain order and obedience to law, and to discourage class antagonism or race hatred.

CASE.—At a time when race prejudice in a Southern city was threatening violent expression, a story was brought to a newspaper that a young white woman had been insulted by a negro as she stepped into the elevator which he operated in a down-town store. The editor knew that only an insignificant spark was needed to start a conflagration.

The story was suppressed.

Comment.—This case invites comparison with another in which the bloody riots in a race war in a Southern city were generally ascribed to the sensational and therefore inflammatory articles printed in one of the daily papers.

As an Eastern metropolitan newspaper states the matter in its office rules: "Don't stress the fact that the villain of your story is a negro, or an Italian, or a Methodist, unless that fact is essential. It is injurious to the interests of the paper to indict a race, or a nationality, or a religion, for the misdoing of an individual."

"Don't Leave the Field to Rumor"

The most primitive newspapers recognized and proclaimed their purpose to "discourage rumors."

CASE.—An automobile driven by a prominent business man and a member of one of the "first families" of the city was wrecked on the road from a neighboring town late at night. The man suffered broken legs and other injuries. With him was a married woman, also of a leading family in the city, who received severe injuries and was taken to a hospital in the city. The morning paper made no mention of there having been a woman in the accident. A brother of the injured man was quoted as saying he was alone in the car. Relatives interviewed the editor of the evening paper and asked him to save a scandal by suppressing the facts. Moreover, the father-in-law of the woman said that she had spent the previous day visiting friends in the neighboring town and while waiting to board an interurban car for her return had been offered a ride home by the young business man. He insisted that the meeting was entirely unpremeditated and innocent. The victims of the accident were old friends and had not been the subject of previous gossip.

The paper printed the entire story, including the father-in-law's explanation of the circumstances.

Comment.—The newspaper is not a regulator of peoples' private lives, though the fear of publicity, like the fear of the police judge or the penitentiary, is a wholesome influence. But in this case the editor who mutilated the story in the morning paper made himself ridiculous. His only choice was between printing the whole story or suppressing the whole story. Moreover, suppression was ineffective. Rumors about the woman in the case spread quickly over the city. The explanation given by the father-in-law did not go along with them. The evening paper, in giving a full account of the affair really did a kindness to all concerned—a fact that was later acknowledged by them.

CASE.—Small-town gossips were very busy over the indiscretions of a married woman with a prominent young business man. The husband knew of the talk and was greatly humiliated by it. The woman protested her innocence but continued the affair. The local paper printed an item to the effect that a triangle case was brewing and that the people of the town wanted it stopped before it was too late. The young business man asked the editor to "lay off of him."

Nothing more was printed.

Comment.—It was none of the editor's business in the first place. We may fairly regard this case as disposing of the various types of scandal and gossip cases that do not get into court. Broadly speaking the reputable newspaper has nothing to do with them. It was on them that the yellow press fattened—and does yet. The public will buy newspapers to read that sort of thing, as it will buy liquor and drugs. The self-respecting man will not make a living by vending that sort of poison. A human judge can handle such a case from the standpoint of the law; an All-Wise Judge can determine guilt or innocence from the standpoint of morality; an editor is not a judge. The busybody is held in universal contempt. A scandal sheet is a busybody raised to the *n*th power. Nobody believes that the public health—in mind or behavior—is not demoralized by such filth. The clever remark, "The wages of sin is publicity," is as bad a slogan for a newspaper as could well be contrived.

Publicity As a Big Stick

The threat of publicity has been used as a corrective influence, or, as in the following case, as a means of bringing about action desired by the editor.

CASE.—A judge of a state supreme court, according to evidence laid before the editor of a metropolitan newspaper, was guilty of questionable professional conduct. The judge said he was innocent but that he was an old man and "broke," and that the publication of the story would lead to tragedy. He agreed to resign from his position on the bench if the story was withheld.

The story was suppressed and the judge resigned.

Comment.—The editor, in this case, sat as an extra-legal judge, heard the evidence, and passed sentence. The power of his authority came not from the law but from his engine of publicity. Neither can it be said that the threat of publicity would have been impotent if the law also had not been against the accused judge. Many an innocent man has been injured by ruthless publicity. The decision in the case seems highly questionable. It was probably rationalized by the editor as being a measure sanctioned by public interests; but it appears more like unwarranted domination.

The "Official Statement"

Public men often insist that their version of a situation should be accepted by newspapers as final.

CASE.—A minister resigned from his pastorate. The editor and many other people knew that he was leaving because of disagreement with his official board on the question of a parsonage. But he told the reporters that he was leaving the town on account of his health.

The paper accepted his explanation as if it had been true and printed it as a part of the interview, without contradiction.

Comment.—Suppression of facts by substitution of an official representation of the facts is often obnoxious. To be sure, there are things which it is not necessary for the public to know, but usually the official pronouncement contrary to fact is questionable.

In connection with this case involving a minister, the careful newspaper's attitude in more serious cases may be described in the words of an Eastern editor:

It is the policy of our paper not to over-display or sensationalize either telegraph or local stories pertaining to the clergy of any sect who have erred or fallen from grace in the eyes of their parishioners, on the ground that the fact of a man's being an ordained minister is no fair reason for exploiting his missteps or mistakes, which same mistakes in a layman would be given no undue notice.

"Take Your Own Medicine"

The idea that a journalist should treat himself as he treats others seems elementary, but is far from universal acceptance by editors who find it difficult to achieve detachment of themselves from their newspapers regarded as their private properties.

CASE.—The editor of a newspaper was arrested for alleged responsibility in an automobile accident. The story was printed. The editor, to show that he was "game," had his name set in extra size type.

Comment.—Except for the extra size type, the matter seems to have been handled admirably. The editor in this case had

a reputation for consistency in printing names of those having a court record. "Show us where any one else's name was left out in a case like yours and we will leave yours out," was his standing challenge. His theory was that "each reader buying a paper makes a definite contract with it for the news—and not merely the news of those without influence to keep their names out of the paper." At least one admirable short story published recently embodies the situation in this "case." A managing editor noted for his "nose for news" is confronted with the duty of playing up the disgrace of his own son. He does his duty.

CASE.—The *Emporia (Kansas) Gazette* printed an account of the appearance in police court of two of its reporters charged with violating a traffic ordinance. The names were given. Then it remarked: "The next time you come to the office and try to keep an item out of the paper on account of the respectability of the parties concerned, just remember this one. Both of these culprits have respectable families; each of them has sick relatives who will die if the news is in the *Gazette*; and both of them have good jobs which they will lose if the story is published."

"There Are No Reporters Present"

There are circumstances, no doubt, under which a speaker on some semiprivate occasion has a right to ask that his remarks be not reported in the newspapers, but any understanding that "there are no reporters present" is a matter for arrangement between the persons chiefly concerned. A request by a public speaker that his remarks be regarded as private is a request and nothing more.

CASE.—Three towns, some two hundred miles apart, were competing for selection as the best place for the location of a project in child welfare work sponsored by a national organization. One important consideration was the guaranty of public support of the project; so in one of the towns a meeting was held to acquaint the people with the undertaking. The papers were asked to refrain from giving more than bare mention of the meeting, in order that the other contestants might not be spurred to greater activity. The papers complied with the request.

Comment.—The request was foolish and the papers gave short weight in the news delivered to their readers that day.

Group Judgments As to Suppression

In some of the codes of ethics adopted by associations of editors are specific references to suppression. In others the matter is covered in general terms.

As an example of the latter, a paragraph from the canons of journalism promulgated by the American Society of Newspaper Editors, may be quoted: "A newspaper should not invade private rights or feelings without sure warrant of public right as distinguished from public curiosity." Or the rule of a metropolitan daily, "Deal gently with weak and helpless offenders."

More specific in nature is the following from the code adopted by the Oregon State Editorial Association:

It shall be one of our canons that mercy and kindness are legitimate considerations in any phase of journalism; and that if the public or social interest seems to be best conserved by suppression, we may suppress; but the motive in such instances must always be the public or social interest, and not the personal or commercial interest.

It goes almost without saying that newspapers every day are withholding news because they are not sufficiently sure of all the essential facts. One newspaper held a story of a crisis in an Asiatic country a month, until its special correspondent could ascertain the facts, while all of its competitors were printing it in frequent installments. Many newspapers suppressed the government's lists of draft evaders, fearing to do injury through publication of names not properly in the list.

"Professional Conduct"

The question naturally arises as to whether it is fair to the journalist to expect him to sacrifice his financial interest in order to conserve the public interest. Why should we say that it is the duty of the editor to make enemies, if necessary, in giving the public the news and in performing other kinds of community service? Why can not the editor run his busi-

ness as other men conduct theirs—in the manner that will insure him the greatest returns?

The answer is, of course, that the newspaper is not merely a business concern. In the very nature of things it can not be a good newspaper if run on the controlling principle of business, that the good will of everybody is at the basis of success. No man should enter the field of journalism unless he is willing to take the losses that are sure to come from following the policy of representing the interests of the unorganized public against those of powerful individuals and groups. That is an essential part of the editor's career. It calls for courage; it appeals only to the man with a vigorous strain of altruism. That men of other ideals are financially successful in journalism and are not ashamed to maintain that their vocation is nothing more than a business means nothing except that in every business and profession are men who do not accept the best standards of that business or profession. They are the dead weight carried by their colleagues who are blessed with clearer vision.

Nor, after all, is so much more required of the journalist than of those in other professions. The doctor, in protecting the public by a strict adherence to quarantine laws, makes enemies who represent for him a financial loss; in fact much of the modern physician's labor is towards lessening the need for physicians. The lawyer, in lending his strength to the protection of causes that are unpopular, though entitled to protection for their legal rights, sometimes loses valuable good will. The minister whose preaching and whose activities are directed at concrete evils rather than at evil in general must pay the price. He should not have entered the ministry unless he could cheerfully accept the penalties. So with the editor. To make an enemy by refusing to suppress a piece of news to which the public is entitled should be to him merely a part of the day's work. Of course, this is easier said than done. It is easier in the city than in the small town. It may properly be avoided, so far as good nature and diplomacy and sympathy can avoid it; but there is a line of professional conduct on which courage stands firm.

Weighing All Considerations

Nothing would be more ridiculous than to attempt to reach a decision in a doubtful case by a mechanical method of weighing the arguments for and against suppression. Broadly speaking, every case is different and must be settled on its merits. But to do this wisely is to bring to bear a judicial mind on all the considerations. This process may well be illustrated graphically in a table presenting the reasons, properly weighted, for and against suppression. To be sure, there is no time in the editor's day to refer to such a table, even if he were academic enough to make one. Most decisions must be made on the instant. But the fact remains that the editor with the ability to look at all sides of a question without being paralyzed thereby into indecision, is the one who will have least occasion to regret "bad guesses."

CHAPTER V

OPPORTUNITIES FOR INDEPENDENCE AND COURAGE*

Complete independence for a newspaper is not a desirable thing, any more than absolute truthfulness is always desirable. Any newspaper by printing the whole truth about people and events for a single day could become an antisocial influence. Human beings are able to live with each other in some degree of harmony only by reason of those everyday amenities of which restraint in speech is one. There is a grain of wisdom, along with the irony, in Mark Twain's maxim: "Truth is the most precious thing we have, therefore let us economize it."

An independent newspaper of low ideals is far more dangerous to society than if it were responsive to outside influences—assuming, optimistically, that the more powerful influences are likely to be corrective, as indeed they must be or we should be moving towards the Dark Ages, not away from them.

Meaning of Independence

The expression, "independence of the press," is used here as being much broader than "freedom of the press," which refers to one particular kind of liberty. It is broad enough to include such subjects as independence of the advertising influence, of public opinion and public taste, of commercialism and the capitalistic influence, of insidious propaganda, of political parties or factions, of friends or enemies. Some of these matters merit rather close examination.

First of all, it is necessary to survey rapidly some of the main facts in regard to the development and present status

*In this chapter, as in some others, cases, being hardly necessary to clarify the discussion, are used but little.

of that most fundamental kind of independence, freedom from governmental control.

The Winning of Freedom

From its earliest infancy, journalism has been engaged in a struggle for independence of control by government. In England and in the United States the fight was practically won generations ago, though the press has not ceased to feel that "eternal vigilance is the price of liberty." In some other countries, as in France and Italy, newspapers have enjoyed a large measure of freedom, while in still others, as in Germany and Russia, periods of comparative independence have been succeeded by periods of political control. In all countries, war crises lead governments to impose censorship regulations or other measures for control of the press which are equivalent to censorship.

The fight for freedom of the press has had three main aspects: (1) the struggle against censorship and licensing by which those in authority sought to dictate as to what should be printed; (2) the opposition to unjust and unfairly administered laws, usually good in themselves, against libelous, scandalous, blasphemous, and seditious publications; and (3) contention against oppressive taxation.

The Struggle in England

Freedom for the press in America was partly won in England. The decisive battles against censorship were fought in that country. From the time of the Star Chamber edicts, early in the seventeenth century, to the abolition of censorship in 1694, the struggle was waged, and for a century afterwards the equally bitter fight against unjust punitive laws and unfair courts continued. Finally, in 1792 a satisfactory libel law was enacted through the efforts of such statesmen as Erskine, Fox, and Camden.

Taxation as a means of restraining or even suppressing publications was in use in the eighteenth century. It continued, largely as a means of revenue, as late as the middle of the last century, when the law taxing advertisements was finally

repealed after a hearing in which Horace Greeley, who was in London at the time, gave testimony against the practice.

The history of the long struggle for freedom of the press reveals not a few bold and unselfish figures. Many heroic utterances are to be found in the record, of which perhaps the noblest is the "Areopagitica" of John Milton, an attack on licensing and censorship based on the belief that, "Though all the winds of doctrine were let loose to play upon the earth, so Truth be in the field, we do injuriously by licensing and prohibiting, to misdoubt her strength. Let her and Falsehood grapple; who ever knew Truth put to the worse in a free and open encounter?"

Freedom of the Press in America

In our own country governmental control by censorship and licensing is forbidden in the first amendment to the Constitution: "Congress shall make no law . . . abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press. . . ." It is likewise forbidden in similar terms in the constitutions of the states, for example, in that of Illinois: "Every person may freely speak, write and publish on all subjects, being responsible for the abuse of that liberty." These liberal guaranties were in part reactions from usages in the Mother Country and in part the results of the lesson learned through colonial days, that "government is intolerant of criticism." The first American newspaper, *Publick Occurrences*, was suppressed after its first issue, in 1690, by the General Court of Massachusetts. The First Continental Congress, in 1774, declared the importance of liberty of the press to consist "in the advancement of truth, science, morality, and the arts in general, and in the diffusion of liberal sentiments on the administration of government, the ready communication of thought between subjects, and the consequential promotion of union between them, whereby oppressive officers are shamed or intimidated into more honorable and just modes of conducting affairs."

As regards taxation, the press in this country has had very little annoyance. Massachusetts imposed a stamp tax of two thirds of a penny on each newspaper, in 1785, but repealed

it in the same year. A tax on advertisements—sixpence up to twelve lines, a shilling up to twenty lines, and so on, without regard to the circulation of the paper—was repealed three years later.

The foolishness of levying a tax on the chief organ of intelligent public opinion, in a nation dependent on such opinion for its existence, had become as plain as the foolishness of any other sort of social suicide.

The third enemy of a free press, unjust law and unfair administration of the law, received its severest blow in the trial of John Peter Zenger in New York early in the eighteenth century. The eloquence and the logic of Andrew Hamilton established the principle that not only the fact of publication but the question of its libelous nature and of its truth was to be decided by the jury. Thus was a beginning made at taking tyrannical power from the hands of political authority. An editor accused of a pernicious publication receives judgment by a jury of his peers.

But it seemed to be impossible to learn the hard lesson once for all. In 1798, the Sedition Act was passed by Congress to protect the government from criticism. Its unpopularity, however, helped elect to the presidency Thomas Jefferson, who, writing on the subject in 1804, thus expressed his opinion of the law:

I discharged every person under punishment or prosecution under the Sedition Law, because I considered, and now consider, that law to be a nullity as absolute and as palpable as if Congress had ordered us to fall down and worship a golden image; and that it was as much my duty to arrest its execution in every stage as it would have been to have rescued from the fiery furnace those who should have been cast into it for refusing to worship the image. . . . While we deny that Congress has a right to control the freedom of the press we have ever asserted the right of the States, and their exclusive right, to do so.

As the decades passed, the interpretation of the phrase, "liberty of the press," was more fully arrived at, though it is yet by no means clearly and completely defined by judicial decisions.

Meaning of "Liberty of the Press"

One thing that "liberty of the press" unquestionably means is freedom from previous government license or censorship. It has generally been interpreted by judicial decisions to mean freedom from court censorship through injunctions against publication. It means, in the words of Judge Cooley, "A right to publish freely whatever the citizen may please, and to be protected against any responsibility for so doing, except so far as such publications, from their blasphemy, obscenity, or scandalous character, may be a public offense, or as by their falsehood and malice they may injuriously affect the standing, reputation, or pecuniary interests of individuals."

Freedom does not mean immunity for publications that endanger the public peace or advocate crime or the destruction of organized society. "Constitutional government may protect its own life." It does not mean license to demoralize society. "Constitutional government may, under its police power, take reasonable steps to protect the morals of the people for whom and by whom it is instituted." It does not mean freedom to publish false news with evil intent. It does not mean freedom to invade the human rights of life, liberty, and the peaceful possession of property.

To be sure, there will never be perfect agreement as to how and when restrictions of the press by law should be applied. Volumes have been written as to the administration of the law against seditious publications, to mention one subject especially fruitful of controversy, because it touches so closely upon liberality in government. Broadly speaking, however, the boundaries of freedom of publication are well defined. The newspaper is free to print what it will; but it is held responsible therefor.

The Law of Libel

A standard definition of libel is, "A malicious defamation, expressed either by printing, or by signs or pictures or the like, tending to impeach the honesty, integrity, virtue, or reputation, or publish the natural defects of any person, and thereby

expose him to public hatred, contempt, ridicule, or financial injury." But, to quote one authority, John Gerdes:

If the rules were rigidly enforced, the result would be a severe restriction on our boasted Anglo-Saxon freedom of speech and liberty of the press, which were guaranteed to our forefathers by the English Bill of Rights and to us by the first amendment of the federal constitution, and it would be impossible for the press to discuss frankly the questions of the day. It would also prevent the proper working of our courts, our legislatures and our administrative departments.

The law of libel therefore recognizes certain exceptions to the foregoing rules. There are two classes of communications which the law recognizes as privileged; these are known as cases of absolute privilege and cases of qualified privilege. By an absolute privilege is meant one which renders the author of a statement, which would otherwise be libelous or slanderous, free from all liability for damages even though the statement be false and published maliciously with knowledge of its falsity. By a qualified privilege is meant one under which the author of a defamatory statement can be held only if it can be shown that he acted with a malicious motive in publishing the defamatory matter.

All proceedings of the legislature are absolutely privileged, and no member of the legislature is liable for words published by him in his official capacity. All testimony given in a court of law, which bears upon the issues being tried, is also absolutely privileged.

A qualified privilege is extended to the publication of all fair and true reports of any judicial, legislative, or other public and official proceedings, when the report is made without being actuated by malice. . . . Comment on, or criticism of, the acts of persons before the public, are privileged if they are made in a fair and reasonable spirit, and not actuated by malice. The privilege, however, only extends over comments and criticisms, and does not extend over any false statement of fact. In cases of fair comment, in order to relieve the defendant from liability: (a) the words published must be fairly relevant to some matter of public interest; (b) they must be the expression of an opinion, and not the allegation of a fact; (c) they must not exceed the limits of a fair comment; (d) they must not be published maliciously.

For the same libel there may be a suit for damages and a criminal prosecution, and the damages may be both actual and punitive. In most states the truth is a complete defense in

either kind of prosecution. In some states it is a defense only when good motives and justifiable ends can be shown.

Summing up a discussion of the law and the newspaper, Frederick W. Lehmann, formerly solicitor general of the United States, has written:

Reviewing the laws of this country for the regulation of the press, it may be said unhesitatingly that they are not, any of them, designed for its repression. To the publisher of a newspaper the law of libel may seem harsh as holding him to account for what he publishes without malice and as a part of the current news of the day. Gibbon says that history is a register of the crimes, the follies and the misfortunes of mankind. The daily newspaper is such a history for each day; and such a history, its materials gathered from every quarter of the globe and reported upon the instant, cannot be infallible. If careful and exhaustive investigation is attempted, the incident may cease to be news before its truth or falsity is established. But the good name and good fame of men are not therefore to be left without protection. For injury done to individual reputation, whether through hasty publication or malicious, there must be redress. The hazards of this business, like those of any other, must be borne by the business. To maintain the freedom of the press, it is not necessary to relax responsibility for the abuse of that freedom. As the freedom is great, the standard of responsibility should be high.

Avoiding Law Infringements

The restrictions and penalties imposed by laws are reflected in sets of office rules of which the following, placed in the hands of its copy readers by the *St. Louis Republic*, is a fair sample:

1. Heads are danger points. Never make, in a head, a damaging assertion which is not borne out fully in the text.

2. Make no assertions against any person's conduct or character unless you are ready to supply complete legal evidence.

3. Do not draw conclusions adverse to conduct or character. Let the facts tell the whole story.

4. Be sure the wrong person is not made to appear. This is often done, either by slips in writing names or mistakes about identity of persons involved. Get every name absolutely right.

5. Be careful about using names given by unknown persons. It is a common practice for criminals and other delinquents to assume the names of respectable persons.

6. Any court news affecting business standing or business transactions is dangerous ground. Watch names. Be careful about reporting business failures or embarrassments.

7. Be careful of stories affecting the professional reputé of doctors, lawyers, preachers and men of other professions dependent upon personal esteem.

8. Equally dangerous are stories affecting the character of women. Use no epithets or adjectives unnecessarily. Never on hearsay connect a woman with a detrimental action. Watch names.

9. Be careful of statements from one side. Never base an assertion on these *ex parte* statements. Get both sides or say that it is from one side and be careful even then. The fact that a petition has been filed does not necessarily justify publication.

The beneficent effect of the laws of libel upon journalism is generally recognized. As one publisher has said, "It insures the freedom of the press with the same certainty that it protects the citizen from abuse of the press's power. In every newspaper office it has an influence for good because it fixes the responsibility for errors, thereby tending to prevent their repetition, and puts on record writers who are habitually careless or untruthful."

Independence of the Courts

Rome G. Brown, a distinguished lawyer, has pointed out that:

Except the limited rights of censorship in times of war and certain exceptional cases of censorship by injunction, the rights of restraint on publication which have been reserved as a part of the rights and immunities denoted by the "freedom of the press" are generally in respect of those classes of restraints imposed by penalties after publication. These are restraints on publication. However, they are in law neither restraints on nor abridgments of the freedom of the press.

Such restraints are usually classified as those under the laws against (1) sedition, (2) blasphemy, (3) obscenity and (4) defamation. But this classification omits a very important class which has been variously defined and which has been upheld on varying grounds. This class is (5) restraints imposed through the exercise of the police powers of the federal and state governments, and of the power of the courts to punish contempts of court. This fifth class applies to publications tending to interfere with the

due administration of justice by the courts or which tend to incite breaches of the peace or to cause riots and disorder or to corrupt public morals, or otherwise injuriously affect the public welfare. There must be added also, if not as of this last class, then in addition to it, such indirect restraints as are imposed by departmental regulations, like those of the Post Office.

All these reserved rights of restraint, when imposed and enforced in the exercise of the reasonable discretion given to the lawmaking power, are rights within the freedom of the press, just as much as though they were expressly written as a part of the constitutional guaranty.

In the words of Justice O. W. Holmes of the Supreme Court of the United States, "It is desirable that the trial of causes should take place under the public eye, because it is of the highest moment that those who administer justice should always act under the sense of public responsibility, and that every citizen should be able to satisfy himself with his own eyes as to the mode in which a public duty is performed." Newspapers are privileged, therefore, to print "fair and true reports" of judicial proceedings, provided no malice is shown.

Criticism of court proceedings during a trial, being liable to influence the administration of justice, are against the law. This barrier is removed when the case is finally decided; but scurrilous attacks are unlawful and lay the critic open to prosecution for libel or summary punishment for contempt.

These are the governing principles, but the law in some particular cases is by no means clearly defined.

If a newspaper states that it has evidence that a law is being violated, must its responsible editor present that evidence in court, on penalty of being punished for contempt? If a reporter refuses to tell the court from what source he obtained information regarding an alleged crime, can he be punished for contempt? These and other like questions await final decision, though the latter question, in one form, has been passed upon by the Supreme Court of the United States adversely to one newspaper's theory that statements made to its reporters were privileged communications.

CASE.—The city editor of a Chicago newspaper was convicted of contempt of court for refusing to identify for a Fed-

eral grand jury the writer of an article in the paper forecasting an indictment. He was fined \$500. The decision was confirmed by the United States Supreme Court.

Comment.—Prior to that time there had been several decisions by lower courts holding that newspapers could not be forced to divulge sources of information or the names of writers of articles objected to.

The power of the Federal courts to punish for “constructive contempt” was abolished almost a century ago; but supreme courts of states are not affected by the restriction.

CASE.—The secret proceedings of a grand jury “leaked out” and a newspaper forecast the action to be taken. The responsible editor was sent to jail for thirty days. He was regarded as a martyr to the cause of good journalism, becoming something of a popular hero.

Comment.—If, as seems reasonable, secrecy in grand jury proceedings is necessary in the administration of the law, it is difficult to appreciate wherein this paper contributed anything to social well being.

On the whole, newspapers have as much freedom from domination by judicial powers as they need. And the same may be said as to independence from authorities in the legislative and executive departments of government. American journalism seldom has need for the Japanese “jail editor” employed to “serve time” for the newspaper’s infringement on restrictive laws.

Independence in Times of National Peril

The freedom of the press, as well as other kinds of freedom, is compromised by war. Nations take more or less complete control of their newspapers when it seems necessary to conceal the movements of troops and fleets and other war measures. In the World War the committee on public information at Washington issued a statement to the press in May, 1917, describing “dangerous matter” and “questionable matter” and setting forth “practice and routing” in the handling of doubtful news or other matter. At the head of the

statement was the following quotation from remarks by President Wilson:

I can imagine no greater disservice to the country than to establish a system of censorship that would deny to the people of a free Republic like our own their indisputable right to criticize their own public officials. While exercising the great powers of the office I hold, I would regret in a crisis like the one through which we are now passing to lose the benefit of patriotic and intelligent criticism.

Voluntary censorship, however, soon gave way to strict accountability under the law. The history of restrictive and repressive measures used during the war has been written, and various estimates as to their effects have been made. Criticism of the news and propaganda sent out by the committee on public information has been voluminous, as has also denunciation of the postal department in denying use of the mails to certain publications which it desired to suppress. Many court decisions have been attacked as unwarranted infringements on the freedom of the press. It has been charged that our government proved more reactionary and less liberal during the war than that of England, France or Germany—though a glance at the German Censor Book should remove that impression from the mind of any critic.

Only bare mention of these controversies is in place here, but the assertion may be hazarded that, in spite of what took place in 1917-1918, it is difficult to see any considerable difference between pre-war conditions and those now existing.

"Honor-Bound Censorship"

Control of newspaper reporters and correspondents by government officials through the practice of giving information in confidence, has been condemned by Fred S. Ferguson, vice president of the United Press Associations, and by others who regard it as an insidious and unfair device for suppression and propaganda. The news may be more effectively colored by omissions brought about by the obligation of confidence on the part of reporters towards government officials than in any other way. After a fashion, the official "turns state's

evidence," with the understanding that his disclosures are to be released for publication only at his own pleasure. The price that must be paid for full information is at least partial suppression.

So much, by way of a glance at the subject of the newspaper's independence of governmental control—the growth and justification of it, and its limitations.

The legislative efforts that have been made to improve the press in various ways and the tendency of newspapers to regard all such laws as infringements on their constitutional rights will be considered later.

Independence of Political Parties

Since the rise of the political party press in the period following the Revolution, newspapers in the United States have, in the main, been partisan. During the last few decades, however, a drift towards independence of party has been noticeable. In a recent national campaign, a weekly newspaper was established to carry the publicity of one of the great parties, and a member of the national committee of that party explained the reason for such action as follows:

A careful study of the situation developed that party organs are passing away. In the McKinley campaign of 1896 the national committee distributed literature to 18,000 newspapers throughout the United States. Of that number, 6,100 were out-and-out Republican organs. All we can find to-day are 2,300, a loss to the party of 3,800. Some of them have gone out of business, while others have become independent. Of all the metropolitan dailies in the big cities in the country, only fourteen are classed as devoted to the principles of the Republican Party.

The figures may not be entirely accurate, but the tendency described is unmistakable.

In justification of the party organ it is pointed out that our government is a government by the political party system. If it is good, then parties are good. The existence of parties presupposes adherence to them by the rank and file of voters and by their leaders. Among such leaders are newspapers. Only through the clash of opinions, for which the

press affords the best medium, can the greater good be discovered.

Independence Is Not Neutrality

The fallacy in this line of reasoning arises from a confusion of independence with neutrality. A neutral press would indeed leave the electorate helpless until the "platform" could be revived to take up the work which it has largely resigned to the newspaper. But an independent newspaper is not less militant than a party organ, indeed its freedom to support any party makes for greater aggressiveness since its position may be taken on principle, never as a mere matter of party allegiance.

The Party Organ

Harrison Robertson, of the *Louisville Courier-Journal*, has stated the case against the party organ thus:

The average party organ is ever the champion of its party, right or wrong, and of its adherents, good or bad. It proceeds on the theory that all is fair that may help its own partisans or hurt their adversaries. Fairness to such of its readers as might look to it for straight news and honest views has no part in its program. Either notoriously or insidiously it colors and distorts both its news and views in favor of one party and against the other. The reader who throws aside the organ of one party and takes up the organ of the other party, hoping between them to get the truth, gets buncoed if he credits either one. Neither praise nor condemnation by the party organ, even when deserved, has any force. The only time when its condemnation might count for something would be when directed against the sins of its own party; but it does not admit that its own party has any sins for which it should be chastised. One of the few popular quotations which have not come down from William Shakespeare and which, by the way, Henry Watterson was fond of is,

"Things have come to a hell of a pass
When a man can't wallop his own jackass."

The trouble with the party organ is that it refuses to recognize that its own party is ever a jackass, in need of a wallop; while it insists that the other party is always a jackass, and wallops it

accordingly. To it, long ears on the steed of the opposing party always betray the species of the mount which Balaam walloped, but long ears on its own "critter" are visioned only as celestial wings.

Or, as another journalist, Bob Swayze, of the *Oregon Journal*, puts it:

The newspapers ever will continue to debate great municipal, state and national issues and range themselves editorially on one side or the other; but the party-at-any-price newspaper, the kind which will blazon and champion a political lie on one side and strangle a political truth from the other side is going the way of all flesh. Distrust of the newspapers has grown proportionately with the knowledge that "party expediency" and truth cannot associate congenially in the columns of the same newspaper.

What an unholy mess of odoriferous candidates I have seen the party press attempt to ram through the ballot box during a newspaper career that has extended from the Old South through the Southwest, the East, the Middle-West, the Pacific Coast and into Canada. Such things were done with some success twenty years ago, but they are rarely successful nowadays.

A "provincial editor," writing anonymously in the *Atlantic Monthly* painted a dark picture of the domination of the political boss: "I found that few people in the city considered me other than a hired servant of the political organization that aided in establishing the *Herald*. My function was evidently to explain or attack as the case might be." He was rewarded, when he was "good" by receiving the public printing. He was punished, when "necessary," by being deprived of it. Having surrendered to the domination of the boss when the issue was first drawn, he soon became involved in hopeless subserviency.

An interesting case in contrast is recorded in the *History of the New York Times*, in which the publisher, though in great need of financial support, refused the public printing contract offered to him by the Tammany organization—without any "strings" attached. Mr. Ochs felt that the "strings" would appear sooner or later and that even if they did not, the independence of his paper would be compromised in the eyes of the public.

Dangers in Independence

That political independence affords opportunities for evil doing is not to be denied. The self-seeking newspaper finds a broader field of operations; the arrogant newspaper finds a larger club in its hands. There is a plausibility, too, in the plea that the influence of good newspapers is needed within party organizations. They are in position to help guide the party to higher ground. If they cannot always have their way, they are no worse off than the rest of us who soon learn that life proceeds by compromises. Then too, only a bigoted individual or newspaper is always dead sure of being right. The judgment of the majority within a party has the same sort of validity as the judgment of the majority within the nation.

All of which loses some of its force, however, when the difference between the position of the individual citizen and that of an "organ of democracy" is taken into account. The newspaper should take sides in most conflicts, to be sure, but it has a duty to the public to see that both sides are fairly presented. This is particularly true in view of the growing number of one-paper towns, and of cities having a much smaller number of papers than formerly. A steady trend towards fewer papers, through consolidations, has marked recent years. In the nature of things, it is harder for the party organ than for the independent journal, to be fair to both sides.

Independence of Factions and Leaders

Bismarck had his "reptile press," the early statesmen in the United States had their controlled newspapers, and even in our time there are sundry varieties of "organs." Such papers to-day usually fail of respect and therefore of influence. Just as men of great wealth who have bought control of newspapers have usually found that their investment was unprofitable in every way, so a politician or a political clique is likely to be disappointed in the value of an "organ." Respect is not withheld from an attorney for a corporation or an

office holder or a group of office holders. But the case is different with the newspaper which assumes the functions of such an attorney. It is regarded as having sold its soul. Its attorneyship should be for the public.

Such criticism hardly applies to the man in public life who is a *bona fide* publisher or editor, though the measure of his selfish designs, and the extent to which he appears to be using his newspaper merely as a tool, will determine its influence. Some forty members of the Sixty-eighth Congress were editors or publishers.

Independence of Advertisers

If no one had ever produced a case in which an advertiser influenced a newspaper, yet anybody not entirely unsophisticated would know that, in the very nature of the relationship, such influence is bound to be exerted. To what extent it is an evil influence damaging to the public interest is another question.

Probably on an average not more than one-fifth of the receipts of a small weekly newspaper come from the subscribers. The rest is advertising revenue. In the case of daily papers, small and large, the proportion of advertising earnings is even larger. The price paid for a city newspaper does not cover the cost of the paper stock used in it. On the face of it, this situation seems to leave the door wide open to dictation by advertisers. Self preservation is the first law of newspapers, as of nature. A newspaper is not "commercialized" merely by reason of seeking business success. A starved newspaper is not likely to be influential, because it is not in a position to be courageous. To an increased dependence on advertisers it adds dependence on money lenders.

Business success being a prime object of journalism and an almost necessary prerequisite of other forms of success, and business success being largely dependent on advertising patronage, it seems that the question of an advertising influence resolves itself into the question as to whether or not advertisers have any desire to exert such influence.

But this line of reasoning, while plausible enough, presents

only a superficial view of the matter. There are counteracting factors that help to save the day for independent journalism.

Protective Factors

In the first place, the value of a newspaper as an advertising medium depends not only upon the extent of its circulation but also upon its standing with its readers. No intelligent advertiser is satisfied with quantity of circulation alone. He looks for quality. And one element of quality is reader confidence, making for responsiveness. Any doubt as to the integrity of a newspaper compromises the entire sheet. The most destructive doubt that can exist about a paper is that it is run in the interests of somebody else than the subscribers. Thus it is that enlightened self-interest on the part of the advertiser admonishes him to keep hands off of the paper's policies. But, of course, not all newspaper advertisers are "enlightened."

Another protective feature is the fact that concerted action on the part of advertisers is rarely possible. For one thing, there are so many of them that they cannot agree. The thing in a newspaper that offends one pleases another. Then too, anything like an organized boycott is extremely dangerous. Public opinion has a way of making such action highly unprofitable.

Another saving factor is the knowledge all experienced publishers have, that a concession in one instance is the beginning of thrallldom. Love of independence is instinctive. It is the thing for which men fight.

The far seeing publisher knows that his main asset is his subscription list or his body of readers. Without them he is nothing. With them, he has something so valuable to sell the advertiser that his strategic position is very strong. Some one has declared that the way to find out the money value to a newspaper of each one of its subscribers is to divide the number of subscribers into the total earnings of the paper. The total annual income of a daily paper having five thousand subscribers may be \$100,000. Each subscriber pays about \$5.00 a year, but he is worth to the paper \$20.00 a year, viewed

from the point of view suggested. As William Allen White sees it:

The newspaper code could be very short; and should be based upon the fact that a newspaper is run first, last and all the time for the subscribers. If it doesn't have subscribers, it cannot give its advertisers value received. If it cannot give its advertisers value received, it is taking money under false pretenses. There can be no conflict between the advertiser and the subscriber, because in such a conflict the advertiser has no rights. The newspaper code is, therefore, very short: the advertiser has no rights which the subscriber is bound to respect. A paper run on that basis will make money for its advertisers, and be fair to the subscribers.

CASE.—An elevator accident occurred in a large department store resulting in the serious injury of two women. The management, fearing that customers might be kept away by apprehension of further mishaps, asked the papers not to mention the matter. Two papers complied with the request. The third paper put the item on the front page.

Comment.—This is the typical department-store case. If nothing more serious was meant by the "advertising influence" than such incidents as this, the matter would hardly be worth discussing. If there was no evidence of carelessness on the part of the store management and if the case did not call for a "safety first" warning to the public, suppression might seem to be justified. The trouble lies in the fact that one such request, if granted, leads to another—perhaps in a far more serious matter. The newspaper is fortunate if it can teach its advertisers that such demands are futile. A successful publisher has said, "The matter of relations with advertisers often has a very important bearing on the success of a newspaper enterprise. The storekeeper as a rule is a mild sort of little despot, or likes to make himself think he is. If we permit him to make us think that his advertising is more important to us than to him, our relation is hopeless. If we allow him to dictate to us, we are lost."

Another aspect of the advertising influence is presented in one reporter's account of his experience with it:

CASE.—After turning up a story of the elopement of the son of a wealthy merchant with the old man's cashier, the re-

porter finds that it does not appear in the paper. A good yarn, too. The merchant threatens to disown the boy, but finally kidnaps him from the bride and induces him to enlist in the navy. The girl gets another job and waits for him to return.

On the other hand, he receives orders to play up the story of the mental collapse of another merchant, who, after announcing a general increase of pay for his shop girls, is taken to a sanitarium by his children, from which retreat he telephones the manager of his furniture department and orders him to buy a gross of canary birds and give one away with each purchase.

One of these shops did not advertise.

Comment.—Obviously, either both or neither of the stories should have been published. The newspaper placed itself in the light of attempting to intimidate merchants in its town. Such a policy merits and receives the same contempt felt for any other effort at blackmail.

CASE.—The department stores of New Haven combined in an attempt to dictate advertising rates.

Comment.—A type of case in which the public has no interest except that the newspaper as a vehicle of information may be affected by insufficient revenues, and except for the further fact that dictation in business matters leads naturally to attempted dictation in editorial matters.

The really serious aspects of the advertising influence are hardly manifest in the foregoing cases. They are too trivial and obvious to be called sinister.

CASE.—A street railway company sought a franchise for a long term of years on terms unfair to the public. It had the support of important financial and business interests in the town. The editor of the local paper was not approached in the matter, but he saw fit to print only the news of the proceedings, without taking sides or attempting to interpret the terms of the proposed contract.

Comment.—The advertising influence is often most demoralizing when unaccompanied by threats or bribes or even any words at all. The editor who succumbs to it in a case like this has merely sensed the situation and acted accordingly. He knows, without being told, what is likely to be unpleasant

reading for the class from whom comes most of his revenue. In the foregoing case, more than half of the business men were against the franchise. The paper's attitude disappointed and disgusted them. The editor was not oblivious to the fact; but he knew that disappointment on the one side would not hurt him as much as the active enmity of the other side, which would follow opposition to the franchise.

The advertising influence does not often take the form of an explicit demand: "You will have to stop printing editorials against high prices or I will withdraw my advertising." Those overzealous defenders of the press who deny the existence of any advertising influence on the ground that few such instances have been brought to light are merely employing transparent subterfuge. Their willful blindness does no service to the press. The journalists who have had the courage to lay bare the true conditions and to exalt the principle that a newspaper must be edited for its subscribers are the ones to whom credit is due for such betterment as is observable.

CASE.—The managing editor of a national publication has given the following instance:

A publisher has frankly told me that what he considers the "best piece of constructive journalism" done by his paper in recent years was an article so ably defending the meat packers against an official charge of having shipped rotten meat to soldiers in Texas that it got for him large advertising contracts from the packers. He said also that the packers' publicity bureau sent this article to every leading newspaper in the country, several of which reproduced it in whole and many more in part. This is the same publisher who later excluded from his paper all mention of the Federal Trade Commission's indictment of the packing combine but was keen for a big spread when the packers' publicity agents brought charges of socialism against that Government department. There may or may not be special significance in the fact that this "best piece of constructive journalism" occurred in a leading religious weekly, proclaiming itself intent upon the higher things, not of the flesh but of the spirit.

Comment.—A case on which both sides should be heard before forming an opinion.

CASE.—A large national advertiser made gifts to a college at its commencement. A local newspaper "played up" that

feature and then sent its advertising solicitor to the philanthropist's office with clippings in one hand and an advertising contract in the other.

Comment.—Completeness requires that such a case as this should be included, in which the "advertising influence" is made to work backwards.

CASE.—One of the largest advertisers in a small city had a woman arrested for shoplifting. She was a member of his church. He told the local paper that if it printed the story he would withdraw his advertising. Since it was a matter of court record, the story was printed. The advertiser made good his threat, during a period of six months.

Comment.—A cheerful feature of such a case is that independence once asserted in this way is not likely to be questioned again. This editor reports, with a wry smile at the irony of the thing, that shortly after the incident just described he reported a case in court in which an enemy of his was defendant, and was generally accused of being vindictive!

The country publisher is in a much more difficult position than the city publisher when it comes to resisting the advertising influence. One advertiser more or less means more to him than to his colleague in the city. An enmity in a small town is a much more uncomfortable thing than in a large town. It is almost as if it were in the family, so many are the embarrassments arising from it. Men of large affairs, commercial as well as political, may be antagonists to-day and allies to-morrow. Men of small affairs seem less flexible, less able to forget the past in the exigencies of the present. The country journalist who would maintain his independence at less than a ruinous cost needs not only courage but infinite tact.

Comparative View of Conditions

The following comment by a well known publisher and writer, Charles H. Grasty, in the *Atlantic Monthly*, is illuminating, though a demurrer must be permitted to the statement in the first sentence. It seems broader than is justified either by what follows or by conditions. It is as much too far in the one direction as the views of, say, Upton Sinclair are in the other.

The relation of our journalism to its chief source of support—mercantile advertising—is free from danger and confusion. I regard this danger as the greatest that presents itself in the development of independent journalism. I do not mean to cast any reflection whatever on the merchants who patronize the newspapers. On the contrary I think they behave with great restraint toward the journalistic institution for which they so largely furnish the sinews of war. Nor do I think they would be pleased at bottom if they could break down journalistic standards and reduce that profession to the status of a pure business.

It is a fact, however, that in England the relation is entirely different. I do not say that the advertiser demands any share in the conduct of newspapers there, but the relation is certainly one that I would feel very uncomfortable and anxious about if I were running a paper in London. . . .

It is often difficult to tell what is advertising and what is reading matter in a London paper. Until recently, when, led by an American, H. Gordon Selfridge, the big shops began to use large advertising, the newspapers have been relieved of the consequences of their methods through the fact that no merchant has spent enough money to tempt him to tamper with the newspaper which carried his business. London has all of this pressure yet to meet and resist. We have gone through with it on this side of the water, and newspapers have become freer and freer from anything like advertising domination. It is frankly admitted that in the cities newspapers are dependent for their profits on the business of a few big department stores. It would seem to be a perilous position. It is an inverted pyramid, but it has thus far been kept right-side up.

I am of opinion that extra-journalistic domination from any other quarter is impossible; but the advertiser can get at the newspaper, especially one that has not yet reached the goal of success, in most convenient ways. I can give an instance from my personal experience. In 1905, after I had had the *Baltimore News* for thirteen years and success seemed to be sure, one fine afternoon all the department-store advertising which had been in the paper in bulk for some years suddenly disappeared. The management had always been rather cold-hearted toward the advertiser, in view of its conviction that independence of all outside influence was necessary in the conduct of the paper; and the raising of the advertising rate had furnished to our customers an excuse for an organized movement to discipline us. Their meetings were secret and we were able to obtain but little information. Such as we could obtain we published, and we made a candid but moderate statement of the position in which we found ourselves. If an

organization of this kind could be formed and maintained, it meant that any paper could be destroyed by its large local advertisers.

Some of my conservative friends from other cities, in a spirit of kindness, came to Baltimore and urged me not to keep up a fight of this kind, but to try to come to terms in private. I believed in the other method and was anxious to demonstrate the soundness of independence as a newspaper policy and the stability of newspaper property. At the end of a few weeks the merchants who were boycotting us were themselves boycotted by their customers to such an extent that they voluntarily surrendered. The only thing that we did to protect ourselves was to publish the facts, and this we did in no intemperate spirit. We did not work up any counter-boycott by private means. It convinced me, and I think a good many others, that, if a newspaper were on the right terms with its public, no movement by advertisers could prevail against it.

Independence of the Public

When newspaper publishers find themselves on the defensive because of objections to the character of what they print, they always seek vindication in the specious phrase, "We must give the public what it wants." In one sense, of course, the statement is true enough. That is why it serves so well as a defensive pleading. Success in any department of life depends on being able to contribute to the satisfaction of some human want or need. That is axiomatic. But, as is the case with figures, while axioms do not lie, men lie by means of axioms. It is a simple process of stretching truth to cover implications which the unwary may be trusted not to discover.

As used defensively by gutter journalism or jazz journalism or journalism spotted with filth or froth, it has a fallacy concealed in every term. The word "wants" is ambiguous. It is all right in one sense and all wrong in another. The individual who proceeds on the theory that he will take what he wants, lands in jail. Civilization consists largely in the denial of wants, the establishment of order and restraint and the recognition of relative values.

A high official in a news association relates that ten ministers called on an editor to protest because he allowed the trivial to crowd the significant from the front page of his paper. The editor replied, "There are two doors into this room. If I were

to say to you that in one minute President Eliot would enter the door on the left and James J. Jeffries the door on the right, nine of you would look toward the door on the right." His comment is: "The editor in the story was right in his argument with the preachers. A world's champion prize fighter is more interesting than a college president, and the reason for that is not hard to find. The prize-fighter appeals to the elemental in us. Our civilization and culture are still comparatively new; the varnish on them is hardly dry. Until just a few centuries ago our ancestors were savages, each man battling against his fellows in defense of his woman and children and his food."

So it seems that the public wants those things which lead it back to its days of savagery! It has taken the trouble to put on a varnish of culture but really wants it removed and the function of the newspaper is that of a varnish remover. Strange how easy it is for this type of journalistic mind to deceive itself by professing its inability to distinguish between wants which are instinctive, elemental, impulsive, transitory, and those which are acquired by education and experience, sanctioned by reason, permanent, valid.

On this aspect of the subject Fabian Franklin, journalist and author, has written:

It may be said, to be sure, that any people gets the kind of newspapers it deserves; just as it is said that any people gets as good government as it deserves. In any such saying, there is just enough truth to give it standing; but it is far from being the whole truth. If we were to accept it in the case of government, we should not only have no improvement, but should be sure to go from bad to worse; and the same is true of newspapers, or of the stage, or of anything else in which the downward path is the easiest. To take that kind of view is to forget that in "the people" is included not only the general crowd, but also the persons—relatively few, perhaps, but absolutely many—who have standards higher than those of the crowd; and to forget also that even the crowd is not only what it is but what it is capable of becoming if given the right lead and the right chance. When our civil service was completely given over to the spoils doctrine, when our banking and currency system was disgracefully lacking in the essentials of sound method, many said that this was all we could expect—that it was the only kind of thing our American democracy would

have; but the persons who refused to accept this fatalistic view were sufficiently numerous, and sufficiently resolute, to bring about a thoroughgoing change. It took time, and patience, and energy, and faith, but it was done. And, while the case of the newspaper is not altogether parallel, there is fundamentally the same conflict—the conflict between the view that the people get just what they want and the view that it is the business of men of light and leading to challenge this fatalistic doctrine.

Appeal to the fact that sewer sheets achieve large circulations is inconclusive proof that the public wants them. In some instances it tolerates them because they have certain admirable qualities mixed in—independence in some lines or even devotion to public causes. It is easier to tolerate a newspaper than to resist its appeal when the appeal is made to instinctive interests, however unworthy. To some degree the sensational paper awakens and excites desires that would otherwise remain latent, then points to them as its justification. All rabble rousers through the ages have made similar pleas in justification.

On this aspect of the matter the late George Fitch, journalist, has said:

The question of which comes first, the desire for a certain kind of news or the news itself, has not been answered and is not generally recognized by the editors who say they publish certain kinds of news in response to the public demand. I don't believe that at any time in the past ten or fifteen years, a sudden demand for comic supplements has arisen over night—particularly for the comic supplements printed in colors which jar every established rule of art. I do not believe that that demand came pouring into the newspapers of the United States on a single day and that the newspapers had to comply with it. It appears to me that that demand was cultivated as carefully as the farmer cultivates his soil; and the seed had to be sown before the demand arose.

The same form of alibi is used by theatrical producers and it is refreshing to hear one playwright taking higher ground:

I think the public wants something very different from what it cries for. If you gauge what the public wants by what it gets, your estimate of what the public wants is apt to be rather discouraging. As a matter of fact those people in whom are vested the right to dole out to the public its artistic fodder, treat that public exactly

as a tenement mother might treat her squalling youngsters; the settlement worker has probably left a perfectly good formula of nutritious food, but a formula that requires a slight cultivation of the baby's taste for the baby to swallow the food; the tenement mother, however, finds that bananas are what the child grabs for and gorges down with satisfaction, and so bananas are what the baby gets. The white-faced tenement baby is the result.

The answer is: The public—great, overgrown baby—is clamoring for its bananas. And it is to the eternal shame of those of us who dole out its nutriment that we do not take as a moral responsibility the education of that baby for more nutritious food.

A second fallacy in the phrase, "A newspaper must give the public what it wants," is in the word "public." There are many publics. The specious newspaper apologist uses the phrase as justifying his policy of giving what it wants to that public which is lowest in its tastes and least disciplined in its indulgences. A purveyor of any sort of agreeable poison can find a public that wants it. Until humanity is standardized there will always be minorities whose wants run the whole scale of ethics. But minorities are accustomed to accept denials of their wants—even majorities do so—in the interests of what they recognize as the common good.

It is obvious that, as Max O'Rell once wrote, "journalism can not be now what it was when it was read by people of culture only." And since that was written, newspaper circulation has gained a universality not dreamed of by Mr. O'Rell. It has gained this greater clientele partly by judicious compromise of the standards that could be maintained for cultured minds only, and partly by illegitimate use of the methods of panderers, by cowardly surrender to opportunism.

On this phase of the subject Hamilton Holt, editor of the *Independent*, said before a newspaper conference:

We might divide the public into three parts: the first, the so-called thinking classes and intellectual classes—"highbrows" if you will; second, the mass of the people, "low brows" as they are sometimes called; third, the depraved and debased and criminal classes.

I hold that no editor has a right to make a paper deliberately for the last class—for the debased class; and if he tries to do so, he should be ostracized by other editors and if necessary should

be prevented by the state through legal process. But every criminal has some good side to his nature, and the upper classes have a yellow streak in their nature; and I do not believe that an editor should be allowed to appeal to that yellow streak.

It is perfectly legitimate, I think, for an editor deliberately to attempt to appeal to the intellectual classes or to the masses; and which is the most important I don't know. I suppose it will never be decided whether Harvard or the public schools have done the most for the state, and whether the man who writes a scientific treatise has done more than a man who writes a novel. I think it is legitimate to appeal to these classes.

The third fallacious term of the plausible phrase "A newspaper must give the public what it wants," is the verb in the imperative mood. Just why "must" it so act? There are other vocations than journalism. If a man finds he can succeed as an editor only by corrupting public morals, his best plan is to try to succeed at something else. A crooked lawyer or a crooked doctor is not sanctioned on the ground that he must be crooked or fail in his profession. As a matter of fact, crookedness is usually deliberate not imperative.

The editorial apologist who substitutes "should" for "must" in the effort to raise his depravity to the level of duty is too ridiculous to deserve serious attention. His gift for rationalizing misconduct approaches genius. If there are obligations anywhere in journalism, one of the chief is the obligation to give the public what it ought to have, what it wants in its better moments, what the editor in his character as custodian of the public weal can, with a clear conscience, give it.

This is not idealism; it is mere decency. It is not theory; it is common sense. There are impractical idealists, to be sure. Cyril Arthur Player, of the *Detroit News*, had them in mind when he wrote:

Firmly convinced as I am personally of journalism's mission of leadership, I incline to think that it must draw the key to its leadership from the highest note it finds in the public, and not the highest note it imagines the whole public should reach if all the public was on the high-road to an evangelical heaven.

But Mr. Player would be the last man to agree that a newspaper can play down to the submerged tenth or the submerged

nine tenths, as you choose to regard mankind, and keep its self-respect.

As to this theory that an editor is compelled to bend to a low public taste, George Fitch said, one time, to a group of publishers:

Does a man have to publish what the public demands? It depends altogether on what kind of an editor you are, just as it depends in every line of business whether you have to give the public what they demand.

Boys demand certain things that they cannot have; and they grow up and demand booze and certain men cater to that demand. But we don't build monuments to the saloonkeepers when they die. Other men have educated themselves into the belief that they cannot live without morphine, and you can always find in every city some druggist who supplies the great popular demand for morphine; but he has to do it on the sly, because if we catch him we certainly teach him that there are some popular demands which cannot legally be supplied.

Other people seem to need a certain type of reading—a type of reading which subverts probably all the moral instincts they have, which vitiates their taste, which destroys what regard they have for morality, which leaves them in a state of hopeless misinformation on all public affairs; and that is a recognized demand and some papers supply that. But if I were an editor and supplied that demand, I would not go around bragging about it.

The substance of the issue was boiled down to this brief statement by the late Lyman Abbot, editor of the *Outlook*:

The defense of the newspaper that it must give the public what it wants is no better defense than it would be for the selling of whisky, cocaine and opium, for the marketing of stale fish and decayed vegetables, for the publishing of obscene literature and obscene art, for putting on the stage licentious dramas, for houses of prostitution and gambling hells, for the manufacturing of dynamite bombs for anarchists. In all these cases the seller gives to the people who buy, what the people who buy want. The editor is or ought to be a public teacher and he ought always to give to the public the facts of life and the truths of life as honestly and as accurately as he can do it with the means at his disposal.

An editorial writer in a journalistic periodical aims to take a realistic view of the matter:

The editor might like to reform the methods and conditions, but that is impossible; single-handed, he can only whistle against the wind. He must decide whether he will conform to the conditions of competition and succeed, or stand by his convictions of right and fail. It is a decision he must make every day—yes, a hundred times every day. The most pitiful part of it is that those with the highest ideals, the keenest sense of right and acutest conscience are the ones who must suffer most. There is no graver, more vital, more insistent, more fundamental editorial decision. It cannot be dismissed as a moral platitude. It reaches to the very depths of the editorial soul. It is the matrix that shapes every phase of editorial policy.

Is it better to follow your high ideals and suffer, or is it better to give them up and be so spiritually dead that your carrion stinks to the stars? Which is really the success and which really the failure? What's the answer? What is your answer for yourself?

His conclusion is that the great editors of the past have won through maintenance of ideals, and that human nature responds to nothing so quickly as righteousness of purpose bravely maintained.

The situation is thus described by Lee A White, of the *Detroit News*:

The greatest present weakness of the press is a subservience, not to advertisers, but to an anonymous and largely imaginary public; and this public, by its very anonymity, like the author of a blackhand letter, has capacity to disturb the vacillating editorial mind, and the sensitive purse of the weak-willed publisher. It takes courage to determine upon a course and pursue it in the face of a declining circulation. But more than one editor, wherever you find robust newspapers, has, by courageous persistence in a course in which he believed, won back those who deserted with compound interest in the shape of a multitude of new readers who found his conduct laudable.

There is no occasion for the surrender of ideals by editor or publisher on the ground of unintelligence of the public. The difference between the high and the low brow is, anyway, largely a matter of vocabulary; and the writer who learns to think clearly and express himself simply will find the great mass absorbing his ideas.

And this opinion as to editorial responsibility is advanced by the English author, Gilbert K. Chesterton:

There is the notion that the press is flashy or trivial because it is popular. In other words, an attempt is made to discredit democracy by representing journalism as the natural literature of democracy. All this is cold rubbish. The democracy has no more to do with the papers than it has with the peerages. The millionaire newspapers are vulgar and silly because the millionaires are vulgar and silly. It is the proprietor, not the editor, not the sub-editor, least of all the reader, who is pleased with this monotonous prairie of printed words.

A favorite recourse of some newspapermen in seeking to justify the superficialities and trivialities of journalism is to point out that such things make up the greater part of people's lives. They point out that news value is densest in the neighborhood of violence, scandal, mystery, personalities. All of which is beside the mark. If our thoughts are mostly trivial the newspaper has a glorious opportunity to relieve our monotony by being different. We all like change of diet. It also has the opportunity to make non-sensational but truly significant things interesting by cleverness in handling. Newspapers which accept that challenge do not usually fail to get the attention of the public. A newspaper worth its salt is too independent to "give the public what it wants" without question.

Independence on Specific Issues

Much has been said, and wisely, about the primary obligation of a newspaper to its subscribers. A word may be added as to the dangers of too great subservience in this relation, in specific cases. The tyranny of the mob is the worst of all tyrannies, whether it is dictation by public opinion as to newspaper policy or by public taste as to newspaper content.

CASE.—A newspaper advocated the release of political prisoners still in confinement some years after the World War. It was denounced and threatened by individuals and organizations. It dropped the subject.

Comment.—No one should be too sure that in the editor's place he would have done differently—with possible ruin threatening him. It is easy to advise martyrdom for another. One can only express the wish that this editor had possessed

sufficient resources to support independence, whatever it might cost.

CASE.—A religious organization employed lobbying methods to defeat in the legislature a health measure framed to advance the public welfare. One newspaper exposed and denounced the proceedings.

Comment.—All newspapers meet situations where they feel it their duty to offend large bodies of their readers. Nothing else in journalism calls for greater courage. When Horace Greeley advocated fair treatment for Jefferson Davis and signed his bond, he paid an enormous price for a clear conscience.

CASE.—A nonpartisan movement for lower taxes swept several agricultural states. Newspapers were threatened with the boycott if they took up the defense of public expenditures. They printed reports of the meetings and the resolutions adopted and, for the most part, made no effort to stem the tide of discontent.

Comment.—Some editors doubtless sincerely believed that silence was the best cure for the trouble, and trusted in the arrival of good crops to remove the cause of the uprising. Others were merely discreet. Still others doubtless remembered that the seemingly radical proposals in connection with such movements sometimes find their way into law and cease to appear radical.

At least it can be said that bad temper and intolerance in such cases is not effective. Fairness and an appeal to reason constitute the only practical policy.

A newspaper writer, Jay E. House, thus comments on the exercise of courage in the face of community opposition:

Certainly no newspaper can tell the truth, or anything approximating the truth, if it is scared to death of its town. If a newspaper starts in to cater to the passions and prejudices and whims and fancies of its reading public, it will find it more or less difficult to abandon the practice. But once it has established a reputation for truthtelling, it will find there is very little objection to the habit.

A newspaper is published for its readers, but not subject to their dictation, and the hopeful feature of the matter is that,

down in their hearts, most people recognize that this is right. They may complain, protest, and even threaten; but if the paper has demonstrated its honesty and sincerity, they cannot long suppress respect for its independence.

A Group Declaration of Principle

An unmistakable utterance in opposition to the false idea of subservience to supposed public demands is found in the Oregon code of ethics for journalism:

We dispute the maxim sometimes heard that a newspaper should follow its constituency in public morals and policy rather than try to lead it. We do not expect to be so far ahead of our time that our policies will be impractical; but we do desire to be abreast of the best thought of the time, and if possible to be its guide. It is not true that a newspaper should be only as advanced in its ethical atmosphere as it conceives the average of its readers to be. No man who is not in ethical advance of the average of his community should be in the profession of journalism. We declare therefore as follows. . . . We will consider all that we write or publish for public consumption in the light of its effect upon social policy, refraining from writing or from publishing if we believe our material to be socially detrimental. We will regard our privilege of writing for publication or publishing for public consumption as an enterprise that is social as well as commercial in character, and therefore will at all times have an eye against doing anything counter to social interest.

Independence of Commercialism

In the consideration of journalism as a profession, the relations of the business side to the editorial side will be considered at some length. It is necessary here to present only a few opinions as to the "commercialism" of which so much is now heard.

"The publisher," says one critic, "has begun to dwarf the editor." Another critic within the profession of journalism, Robert L. Duffus, has written as follows in a journalistic periodical, the *Quill*:

In one sense a newspaper is a business enterprise, which sells facts and opinions as a grocer sells cabbages and canned goods. In another sense it is an educational institution. Ordinarily those

who are interested in making it one thing are less interested in making it another, and hence we have the immemorial conflict between editorial department and business office.

What makes a newspaper pay does not always make it a safe guide for the reading public or a good moral influence upon the men who do the writing. This, of course, is an old story to newspaper men. We are a divided profession, with one foot on land and one on sea. Emissaries from the first floor come up to find out why it is that the young gentlemen who write the paper can't keep the prejudices of advertisers in mind. The advertising manager is continually reminding us that it is he, after all, who meets the pay roll. On the other hand we are tempted to regard ourselves as custodians of public morality and public intelligence and to put forward our own opinions as pure doctrine where we would resent as somewhat tainted the opinions of men who sell dry goods or stocks and bonds instead of news.

Of late years there has been a school of newspapermen who have dropped the pretence of being in business for the public's benefit and have frankly declared that their enterprise is conducted for the same reasons as any other business enterprise—to make money by pleasing the public. This is a gain in one way; it at least eliminates a certain amount of hypocrisy. But it is very doubtful if many newspapermen, especially those whose eyes have been opened somewhat by a college training in sociology and economics, are or will be satisfied with such a motive. It is impossible for a thoughtful person to escape the conclusion that newspapers ought to be run for some motive other than profit, whether it is possible or not. There must be some ideal higher than getting the public's pennies and the merchant's dollars or the profession will die of dry rot. There is no basis for a life work in writing of murders, suicides, divorces, accidents, politics, or sports unless these things are tied together in one's mind by a philosophy of life and unless that philosophy seems to the possessor important and worth expressing. If the newspaper writer is so hemmed in by mechanical considerations that he can deal only with the surface of events he might far better be mending boilers. Mechanical journalism begins nowhere and ends nowhere.

It must be admitted that it is difficult to convince a newspaper proprietor that the principal end of journalism is not to make the paper pay. He will like to be a power in the community, he will like sometimes to spread pet ideas of his own, but generally he will first insist that his paper be profitable to him, and sometimes he will be quite indifferent to the kind of ideas he publishes, or even to the total absence of ideas, provided the income is satisfactory. I think the opportunity of the thoughtful newspaper writer may

lie here. More and more we will have to deal with proprietors who are business men rather than editors. From this will come either a colorless, thoughtless, mechanical journalism, unprogressive and uninteresting, or one which is not only intelligent and forward-looking but which will be more or less independent of business-office control. By this I do not mean that we can escape from the necessity of not cutting off the sources of our income. I do mean that we can win a degree of autonomy for the editorial department, under which the business offices will deal with such matters as kind and extent of circulation but will not meddle with the ideas and methods by which such circulation is obtained.

To attain this, a lifting of the standards now prevailing in editorial offices is necessary. Writers of news and editorial articles must acquire a professional code and must stand together in refusing to permit infractions of that code.

Mr. Jason Rogers, a veteran publisher, has said on the same subject:

No newspaper can ever become great or influential until it is known to be making money. Every one is suspicious of the newspaper which is desperately struggling for every cent in sight to keep afloat. No editor can speak with absolute freedom and independence in an unsuccessful newspaper. It is not an evidence of commercialism for a newspaper to seek financial success.

It is owing to these underlying principles that many a newspaper gets set with the dollar sign as the chief goal. The dollar is essential to continued publication, but is not the reason for publication. Increasing costs of publication have put a higher premium on the man able to secure the much needed revenue, but it is a badly equipped newspaper that forgets its real purpose, the publication of news and real service to its community.

Wide experience clearly shows that very few really influential newspapers have ever been built up through business energy alone, although in some cases, around the mere shell of a sheet that looks like a newspaper, a money-making enterprise has been made a fact.

Another publisher has declared that, "The less the director of a newspaper puts his heart into the counting-room, the greater will be the ultimate flood of dollars."

Add to this a paragraph from an editorial in *Editor and Publisher*:

The newspaper is a business enterprise, of course, and what brings in profit must be primarily considered. But direct profit-

making is not all of life, particularly not all of editorial life. Very few enter it for the profit in it and fewer still remain long in it for the money emoluments, because they seldom are large at best.

The real journalist, the successful one, the influential one, the happy one, is he who is seeking not merely to get for himself but also to give of himself. Even if direct profit-making were all of newspaper life, the fact remains that direct profit-making is not the best profit-making. The newspaper capital that pays the best dividends is character—"good will," it is called.

To this may be added a hopeful statement by James Wright Brown, publisher of the periodical just quoted, speaking to an editorial group:

While commercialism is now the dominant note, there is no reason to believe it is more than a passing phase in American journalism. It carries in itself the germ of its own destruction, for newspapers which turn themselves primarily to making money, while subordinating public service and information, cease to be newspapers and leave an opportunity for the genuine to take their place.

These are not the views of impractical idealists unacquainted with newspaper making; and they are essentially optimistic views. Journalism should become so clearly professional in its purposes that it will have little attraction for the commercialized mind.

Independent Though Capitalistic

Closely related to the charge of commercialism is that of capitalism. As in the other case, the charge is largely true but not necessarily damning.

Our society is capitalistic, not socialistic nor communistic. In that sense the press is capitalistic. It is also true that in metropolitan journalism large amounts of capital are required—much larger than formerly. In provincial journalism this is not true in the same degree, though the amounts necessary are not materially less than in other lines of business in the same localities. These facts create in some minds the suspicion that the sympathies of journalism are with big business. And the suspicion is undoubtedly justified in some cases. One

prominent but intemperate critic has reiterated such charges as this:

Some newspapers have fallen into the hands of banking groups and are the incessant apologists for their financial backers and so are more prone to pursue corporate favors than public approval. It marks the decadence of independent journalism and the centralization of the power of the press too often in the hands of those who use this power to hoodwink the people whom they are exploiting.

Another drastic critic, Maxwell Anderson, believes that the "blue pencil" is wielded by capitalism:

Thus four censorships, commercial, political, philosophic, and personal—this newspaper owner maintains for the public good and his own—and another, more pervasive, more deleterious to the paper as an organ of enlightenment. It is a general ban on ideas, and is stressed especially on the editorial page. To see clearly and think sharply cannot be abided, for it leads, as rivers to the ocean, to criticism of institutions, of capital—of the capital even which accumulates for the parasites of newspapers. Therefore, the editorials which fill the back page are sawdust and water, without nourishment for heart or brain. The man who writes them is paid to be innocuous, dull; to say nothing daily in two thousand words and to quench the reader's thought in a flood of mediocrity. Perhaps he had an original genius for it, for he does it well.

A more judicial critic, E. A. Ross, a prominent sociologist, describes the situation as he sees it in these words:

Perhaps never in the history of the periodical press was the character of newspapermen so high as it is to-day. The trouble lies with the bondage of many newspapermen to the advertising end of business, and to the business men who own the capital invested in the paper. Lawyers and doctors have not become annexes of a plant, and hence lawyers and doctors are not falling down on their jobs. Newspapermen too often do, because many of them have become hired men of some capitalist who lacks the newspaperman's spirit and ideals. It is as if a large proportion of physicians were becoming merely attachés of private sanatoria run by business men with nothing in view but profit, and were expected to give such treatment and advice as would result in the largest number of costly operations, and in keeping moneyed

patients the longest possible time in the institution. Something like this has happened to editors.

Seeing then that the trouble comes from the conversion of newspaper publishing into a capitalistic business, instead of the practice of a profession, I see little prospect of relief from an endeavor to improve the moral qualifications of newspapermen. By a fair play bureau something might be done to redress the grievances of wronged individuals against certain ruthless journals, but it could not make the conscienceless newspaper print important but damaging truth, nor prevent it from coloring and distorting the news to suit the financial interests behind it.

Of course, I applaud all movements to quicken professional spirit and pride among newspapermen, because this helps them to stand up against their employers when they ought to do so. Nevertheless, I think the main hope is to get behind a few newspaper ventures, capital—philanthropic or public—not intent on profits like the capital behind our endowed and state universities, or our endowed and public libraries. A few free newspapers would exercise a vast wholesome regulative power upon the commercial press.

Tests for Capitalism

Professor Ross has enumerated what he regards as the "sacred cows" of the capitalistic press: the railroad company, the public service company, traction, the tax system, the party system, the man higher up. He has also devised a plan of using "ten touchstones" by which a newspaper's attitude towards capitalism may be discovered. These touchstones are the major issues on which, at any given time, there is a sharp division between conservatives and liberals, for example, industrial disputes, Russia, fuel control, the steel trust. A survey of the news and editorial columns of any given paper reveals whether or not the attitude of the paper is that of capitalism, of mixed independence, or of liberalism.

Undoubtedly such a survey will show whether a newspaper is conservative or radical or in between, but it is doubtful that the cause of the attitude can be traced to capitalism. If large investments in newspaper property beget a capitalistic attitude, we should expect to find more liberalism in the country press. But it is hardly observable that the country press is less conservative than the city press. Some men are naturally conserv-

ative and some are by nature radicals, and this fact goes far towards accounting for the difference in newspapers. It does not tell the whole story, to be sure. Class sympathy of the rich with the rich is not to be ignored, any more than selfishness in rich and poor alike. But the checks to which a newspaper is subject, through the conditions necessary to that public approval which spells prosperity, are very potent. As some one has truly said:

A newspaper sustained by wealth to serve wealth would be like other typical scions of the rich—a dude, a mollicoddle, a burden upon industry. No man is rich enough to own a paper as his chattel. Such a paper would be a plaything. A business proposition would disregard the narrow view of the capitalistic owner and adopt the broad view of its noncapitalistic employer—the public.

Views of Publishers

Excerpts from statements by publishers of several large newspapers will help to define their attitude, subject, of course, to comparisons with the actual practice of the paper in each case:

If by "capitalistic" we mean influenced and controlled by large interests, my answer is flatly *no*. It has been proven beyond dispute that no newspaper can ever win lasting success and influence if owned and controlled in this way. Our press as a whole is free and independent—owned and operated by men more inclined to unselfish public service than the majority of those in their communities. Time will undoubtedly wipe out the few remaining capitalistically inclined newspapers, for an increasingly enlightened public will not tolerate them in any community.

Those who always look upon Capital and Labor spelled with capital letters, are not the ones best able to work out most satisfactory results for the progress of civilization. Our newspapers recognize that labor represents a much larger part of the people than those included in labor unions and that society is fundamentally concerned in protecting itself from the hard-shelled, slave-driving capitalist as from the blatant, selfish and destructive labor agitator. Our newspapers as a group will be found lined up behind the working man—whether he wears overalls or a white collar—whenever fairness to society demands it. It is good business and it is right.

And from another publisher:

The press is capitalistic to-day in the sense that it requires a great deal of capital to establish and conduct a newspaper. In my opinion there is no ground whatever for the charge that it is capitalistic in the sense of catering to and favoring great financial interests or special privilege groups.

I think if the critics would analyze the situation they would be forced rather definitely to the same conclusion. In 1920, eighty-one per cent of the population who made income tax returns reported incomes less than \$3,000; fifteen per cent had incomes under \$5,000; thirty-three men reported incomes of more than a million. It ought to be the most obvious thing in the world to anyone that a newspaper cannot exist without circulation. There are only two or three centers in the United States where there are sufficient people of the so-called capitalistic class to support a newspaper. In those few centers it is possible to have and, as a matter of fact we do have, in a sense, a capitalistic press.

With these few exceptions the newspaper generally must appeal to the great rank and file of the people, that is, the group with incomes below \$5,000 a year. Readers watch editorials far more closely than many people think, and perhaps they watch news articles more closely than editorials. Any attempt on the part of a newspaper to play the capitalistic game, either in its news or editorials is immediately detected and resented by the reader, his resentment almost certainly taking the shape of the cancellation of his subscription. A newspaper could not be capitalistic if it wanted to be, for the reasons I have indicated, and I have enough confidence in the broadmindedness and uprightness of the editors I know throughout the country to conclude that very few newspapers want to be.

And from a third newspaper director:

Certainly there are capitalistic newspapers—newspapers published by men who see things from the viewpoint of the moneyed interests. And there are newspapers representing the other extreme, too, published by men who see things from a viewpoint that is exactly opposite to that of capital. And in between are other newspapers. And many of them I am happy to believe, are neither capitalistic nor anti-capitalistic, but—shall I say—humanitarian. The men who make newspapers of the sort I have in mind realize that their success depends upon the friendship and good feelings of the public, which is made up of all classes. They believe that the way to win and keep friendship is to be on the right side of great public questions, the human side. That may be the side of capital sometimes, or it may be the side of labor. It is quite likely to be neither in entirety, but a middle ground representing the interests and the welfare of the general public.

I think we may rest assured that a newspaper which adopts a biased attitude, which tells more or less than the truth in an attempt to aid any special interests, will lose prestige and influence so rapidly that it will not long continue to be a serious menace.

Anticapitalism

While lack of independence of capitalistic influences should not be excused on the ground that there is an equal lack, in other quarters, of independence from anticapitalistic influences, yet the following statement merits consideration. It was written for the *Review* by W. J. Ghent, an author who describes himself as a "constructive radical":

The mournful judgment must be recorded that most of the stuff labelled "information" appearing in the radical and pseudo-liberal press is utterly unreliable. Much of it is flagrantly false; much of it is fragmentary, true enough in itself but false in its implication; much of it is trimmed, colored, "doctored" to accord with a particular view. Sometimes, indeed, the insurgent periodical prints facts or figures of great value which have been suppressed or distorted by the regular news journals; but for every service of this kind that it renders it perpetrates a score of offenses against the truth.

There is every reason—except an ethical one—why this should be so. The bias of the insurgent reader and the bias of the insurgent editor are usually in accord, and the result follows. The reader wants facts, near facts, or fabrications that sustain his social theory, that confirm his suspicions, that feed his prejudices, and that warm up his antipathies. The editor or writer on an insurgent periodical who does not understand this truth and conform to it finds himself without a job.

The capitalist news journal appeals to a more general audience. It must, in the nature of things, give a fairer presentation of the news. There are, it is true, in most newspaper offices certain recognized tyrannies that must be obeyed—the department-store tyranny, the index expurgatorious of "enemies of the paper," and that other index—the list of good men and true, "friends of the paper," who must always be spoken of with respect. There is, also, the obvious fact that most daily newspapers—especially those which are members of the Associated Press—are upholders of the capitalist system, and that that system is not deliberately made to appear at a disadvantage in the news. But though the editors and owners are committed to the prevailing system, all the reporters and news writers are not. Indeed, many of them are radicals of one sort or another. In their attempt to write honestly they fare immeasur-

ably better than they would if they were employed on a Socialist, radical, or pseudo-liberal journal.

Insurgent editors and writers acknowledge the fairness of the capitalist news service when it suits them to do so—when the material given is useful to their purposes. They deprecate or denounce it when the material is inconvenient. With all allowances made for the obvious derelictions of the regular news journals, it is still to be said that they print the news. Along with much that is trivial, much that is mere baseless gossip, and much that is deliberately colored, they print most of the worth-while information (other than statistical—and some of that) upon which we rely. The news accounts in the insurgent journals are, in the main, notoriously undependable; they are discounted, even by the insurgent following, when sincerely seeking the truth.

Independence of Propaganda

While propaganda through the press is not by any means an invention of the present generation, it has been a commonplace matter to everybody only since the beginning of the World War. Then for the first time were revealed, to the press as well as the public, its full possibilities. Indeed, without its aid throughout the years of preparation in Europe, the war itself would perhaps have been an impossibility. During the war it raised armies, won battles, shattered the morale of nations, financed the struggle, made belligerents out of neutrals, kept other neutrals from becoming belligerents. It was frankly a war measure. The governments of the world devoted themselves as assiduously to propaganda as munition factories did to high explosives. And one of their most potent agencies was the press. Some of the propaganda was deliberately deceptive, some of it was based on facts. As to its real effectiveness in many cases, opinions differ. Eric W. Allen, dean of the school of journalism in the University of Oregon, has dissented from the usual view in the following statement:

Common report has it that the Germans were highly skilled in the art of newspaper falsification. They lost the war. In 1914 and 1915 the British papers told their people that the Allied armies were in much better positions than they really were in order to keep up public confidence. Some people say that this nearly lost the war to our side, for the Englishman is a dogged fighter, and fights best when all seems lost. As a matter of fact, Britain only put forth her

supreme effort after the "business as usual" nonsense was disposed of, and the common Englishman knew how great the need of sacrifice really was. We all took delight in printing, in unusually big type, assertions that the Audacious was still afloat after she had really been sunk, and that the Germans habitually boiled down their dead for tallow; and the net result was that the press lost its power to carry conviction to a very considerable minority of the people when it was telling the great truths that we all needed to know and wanted everybody to believe.

Even in war time, it is at least an open question whether there is any material gain from falsification to make up for the enormous spiritual loss involved. How much more so in times of peace!

Worse than the material disorganization following on the war, worse than bolshevism, is the menacing power of propaganda. Propaganda means "money talk." It means that a big enough propaganda fund of money can be so overpowering in its influence that almost nobody else can be heard. And propaganda is abroad in the land.

I think the greatest and most dangerous problem before the American people to-day is "shall propaganda, or the independent voices of trained journalists, speaking their own honest unbiased ideas, speaking as human individuals, uninfluenced by fear or favor, reach the public ear?"

Propaganda Since the War

The most pronounced influence on journalism growing out of war conditions has been in respect to propaganda—its early complacency in regard to it; its later acceptance of the role which it was asked to play. Publicity methods have assumed a large place in affairs—publicity and the publicity expert. Practically every human activity now knows and utilizes them. But, of course, publicity is merely a newly developed phase of advertising, developed, however, beyond the imaginings of anybody a very few years ago. Before we look at its methods of operation and its effects on journalism, it is well to discard from consideration the sort of publicity which is merely publicity and nothing more.

Publicity As Distinguished from Propaganda

Even if there was no generally understood difference between the two, it would be desirable to establish a difference in definition, because there are press agents' stories which con-

tain legitimate news and have a right to a place in print. The question as to their appearance in the paper is largely a question of the paper's willingness to print free advertising. The fact that they contain news is not decisive on this point; all good advertising contains news, yet it is paid for. Arthur Brisbane, editor of the New York *Evening Journal*, has made the following distinction:

Legitimate publicity is the spreading of truthful information, or facts, about any cause or condition which is of interest or importance to people generally, and not for the pecuniary or other advantage of the person spreading it.

Propaganda is the giving out (or hiring) of opinions, arguments or pleas to induce people generally to believe what some individual, group of individuals or organization wants them to believe, for the pecuniary or other advantage of the individual group or organization giving out (or hiring) the propaganda.

The public cannot acquire facts and information necessary to reach a correct conclusion on any question without full publicity.

Public opinion is often deliberately misled, deceived or seduced by propaganda or hired opinions.

To see no difference between publicity and propaganda is to see no difference between nutritious food and insidious poison.

Ivy L. Lee, adviser in public relations to the Pennsylvania Railroad, offers the same definition of publicity in amended form:

Legitimate publicity is the spreading of truthful information, or facts, about any cause or condition which is of interest or importance to people generally—provided that it is made plain who is responsible for distributing the information and who is financing its distribution, together, of course, with details as to the amount of money spent and the methods by which it is expended.

Propaganda is not necessarily in the interests of a bad cause, but it is one-sided and therefore deceptive; it is veiled special pleading; it colors and distorts and suppresses facts; in a word, it uses the newspaper as a medium for doing those things which when practised by the paper itself are called dishonest journalism. Sometimes newspapers collaborate in the deception, but at other times they are unsuspecting or careless or unwilling victims. Propaganda has been justly described by

men both inside journalism and outside as the most sinister threat against the integrity and influence of the press that our times have known.

Varieties of Press Agents

A question of independence that has, perhaps, caused almost as much discussion as the department store influence has to do with dramatic criticism. It is a problem confronting the city press only, but having an interest for the entire country which gets its ideas of plays largely from the comment in those cities where the dramatic productions originate. Some newspapers maintain independence, some maintain a *show* of independence, and some are frankly subservient to the press agents and the advertising managers. To the unquestioned legal rights of free comment, the theaters oppose the argument that it is not fair that the financial success of a play, costing a fortune to prepare for its first night, should be jeopardized by the bad digestion of a critic.

The ordinary run of manufactured news about theatrical persons, such as rumors of engagements, ideal family conditions produced by separate establishments with only two meals a week to be eaten at the same table, divorces, eccentricities, milk baths, robbery of jewels, strange pets, etc., are less serious offenses, but yet they take up space. They are deceptive if believed, and damaging to the newspaper if not believed. They are not true, nor disinterested, nor important—not news. That they are interesting hardly indicates that they are a permanent feature of journalism.

Literary criticism less often raises serious controversy, perhaps because publishers' advertising is of minor importance.

CASE.—A theatrical press agent promoted a financially successful season for a play on the road by false publicity relative to the cast of the play, the "stars" in it, and the success of the production in New York. Few newspapers even questioned the truthfulness of the matter he gave them. Their advertising contracts with the company called for reading notices.

Comment.—The foregoing might be called a practice rather than a case. It is one of the many kinds of sins against legit-

imate advertising and against the standing of the press committed by theatrical press agents. It comes under the head of propaganda rather than publicity because it is largely false and because it is used to defraud. The moving picture corporations have been guilty in the same way. When the public is disillusioned in any instance, it seems disposed to place the responsibility where it really belongs—on the press. Adequate remedies for the evil are in the hands of the newspapers.

CASE.—An editorial writer, as pictured by one critic, Irving Brant, wished to discuss the question of recognition for Mexico.

"Boy," calls the editor, "go into the library and bring me everything on the recognition of Mexico."

In a few minutes, the editor has at his elbow a thick volume entitled, *The Truth About Mexico*, a thicker volume called *The Real Truth About Mexico*, and a thickest volume called *The Truthful Reality About Mexico*, all of them written for and published at the expense of the Oil-American Association for Preservation from Mexican Independence. The editor also has for guidance a voluminous report on the necessity for American intervention in Mexico, written by a senator who owns sundry thousands of acres of Mexican land recently expropriated by the revolution and given to the peons. He also has a confidential letter of mimeographed advice from the American owner of a Mexican silver mine. To balance all these, he has a series of beautiful tributes to the character, patriotism and ability of whatever Mexican happened to be president, written by whatever American press agents happened to be in Mexico City when the various presidents marched in.

Comment.—It is the same way if the editor sends to the morgue for clippings on almost any live subject. The boy brings back an armful of propaganda, from which there is little hope of extracting the truth. The tidal wave of publicity that every day surges up to the editor's desk is pretty sure to deposit fragments of propaganda which, sooner or later, are deemed suitable to feed the editorial fires. If it were not so, the millions now spent, on that theory, would be diverted to more promising efforts for misleading the public.

CASE.—Any public man knows that by employing a press agent he can have articles in the magazines under his own name as author; he can get his opinions into the papers by

"being interviewed," on one excuse or another, invented by his press agent; he can have speeches on hand for every occasion; he can be sure that his goings and comings will be noticed; and, best of all, he can retire behind press agent defenses if he happens to come under fire.

Comment.—Perhaps none of the foregoing should come under the head of propaganda. "Harmless publicity," most people say. "Queer that the newspapers fall for it, but harmless." However, three dangers should be pointed out: (1) that such stuff may crowd out of the paper real news of value to the public, (2) that its presence and character may be detected by enough readers to impair seriously public confidence in the fairness and independence of the paper, (3) that performance of the newspaper's duty to maintain direct contacts may be blocked by the intervention of a press agent with his "hand-out." These dangers are present in even the most innocent publicity practices. They are not theoretical dangers, as every inside observer knows.

CASE.—Practically every corporation has its press agents.

Comment.—The dangers mentioned in the preceding case are present in a much greater degree. To say this is not to condemn all publicity methods. Much that they accomplish is beyond criticism; indeed it is public service. They furnish the public with information otherwise difficult of access. The director of public relations, as the head of the publicity department is sometimes called, has a highly useful function in studying the relations between the public and his company, striving to remove prejudice, educating the public to believe that nothing in the company's methods are covered up, developing good will. His function may be as legitimate as that of counsel in legal matters. But its legitimacy depends, of course, on the actual existence of conditions as presented. As a provider of soporifics for the public, in order that its eyes may be closed to unfair practices, he is the most menacing propagandist that threatens the public and the press. Even at best, he is liable to be in the way when the public interest demands that the press have direct contacts with the heads of big business. The remedy lies in the insistence by newspapers that evasions here are themselves relevant facts to which the public is entitled.

CASE.—Many executive departments of government have press agents, bearing such titles as "chief of the bureau of information." Boards and commissions have similar press representatives.

Comment.—A perfectly sound reason underlies these agencies of information. Indeed something of the sort is indispensable, as has been pointed out by Walter Lippman in his book, *Public Opinion*. Voluminous departmental reports are not news, but they often contain news highly important to the public. Some one having broad, and at the same time detailed, knowledge of the subject is needed to translate pages of statistics into readable stories for newspaper correspondents. This is legitimate publicity. The element of propaganda enters when a bureau of information concerns itself with "making a case" for some departmental policy by concealing facts, or when it devotes its energies to glorification of some individual by false emphasis or distortion of facts, or when it operates as a buffer between the press and primary sources of information, by employment of the "hand-out" system which supplies newspapers with nothing but prepared statements.

"Washington," declares J. F. Essary, a Washington correspondent, "has become the great center of propaganda, political, religious, social and industrial. This propaganda is carried on by literally scores of national organizations, having their headquarters in the National Capital. Every one of them is campaigning in behalf of some special interest and every one is eager to get space in the press of the nation. The mail of Washington correspondents is filled daily with propaganda from these sources and much of it is so skilfully prepared that it has genuine news value."

Under the definitions offered, much of this matter is merely publicity; but some of it is propaganda.

The propriety of employing an intermediary between the man of affairs and the press is thus defended by Atherton Brownell, author and editor:

The strict executive, who will not permit a letter carefully dictated to a stenographer to leave his office without rereading before signing, is expected to deal in an offhand way with the most vital topics whenever asked to do so by a reporter, and then to permit his views to go out to the world through the mediumship of a man he has

perhaps never seen who relies upon his memory for faithful transcription, who has no fundamental knowledge of the subject to permit of accurate compression of the details into newspaper space, and who does not permit the subject of the interview to see what he is to be committed to saying before its publication.

Declarations of Independence

The following are typical of the expressions found in journalistic codes of ethics:

From the canons of the American Society of Newspaper Editors:

Freedom from all obligations except that of fidelity to the public interest is vital. Promotion of any private interest contrary to the general welfare, for whatever reason, is not compatible with honest journalism. So-called news communications from private sources should not be published without public notice of their source or else substantiation of their claims to value as news, both in form and substance. Partisanship in editorial comment which knowingly departs from the truth does violence to the best spirit of American journalism; in the news columns it is subversive of a fundamental principle of the profession.

From the Oregon code of ethics for journalism:

We will resist outside control in every phase of our practice, believing that the best interests of society require intellectual freedom in journalism; we will rise above party and other partisanship in writing and publishing, supporting parties and issues only so far as we sincerely believe them to be in the public interest; we will not permit, unless in exceptional cases, the publishing of news and editorial matter not prepared by ourselves or our staffs, believing that original matter is the best answer to the peril of propaganda.

From the code of the South Dakota Press Association:

Partisanship or the taint of propaganda has no part and cannot be present in fair journalism.

Stemming the Tide of Propaganda

By refusing to use the methods of propaganda in its own interests or in the interests of outsiders, and by making the policy effective through redoubled vigilance as to doubtful news sources and as to clever disguises by talented newspaper-

men employed as propagandists, the press can save itself and protect the public. The late President Harding once wrote:

I cannot but feel that the primary purpose of the press, as a social institution, is the opening of men's minds rather than the closing of them.

Propaganda aims primarily at shutting up the mind against other conclusions than those which the propagandists design to implant. Education, on the contrary, aims to open the mind, to prepare it, to make it receptive and to urge it to formulate its own conclusions. Propaganda would at last mean intellectual paralysis; education is, when properly employed, intellectual stimulus. It is better that men should think than that they should accept conclusions formulated by other men for them. We have need in these times that men should think deeply, that they should realize their necessity of settling their own problems.

The late Frank I. Cobb, Editor of the *New York World*, likens to bands of marauding soldiers who terrorized Europe after the Thirty Years War the bands of propagandists wandering around terrorizing public opinion, and he adds:

The gravest duty that confronts the American press to-day is to bring these vast questions that have come out of the war into the forum of public discussion. The barrier of propaganda must be broken down. The competent, independent investigating reporter must come back to his own. This is vital. The American people cannot deal intelligently with any of these problems without knowing the facts, and they cannot know the facts until the newspapers brush aside the propagandists of contending factions and get back to first principles of news gathering. All this is fundamental.

Will Irwin believes that propaganda is beginning to bring about its own undoing. Writing in *Collier's*, he says:

The struggle between truth and falsehood in the press seems to be entering another phase. Publication of views, the old method, was found to be only partially effective; a long campaign of news, presenting only one side of the case, proved a much better method. But experience showed that when you were working for something false, something based on self-interest, something opposed to the irresistible flow of the human spirit, such a campaign would not forever win. The insincere or blind propagandist, like the confidence man, must "clean up" quickly, or he is finished. The time comes when, through the very discussion which he has roused, the

truth emerges. Since the press became an active force, most of the vital changes in human society have proceeded to victory against an overwhelming opposition press.

It seems nature has endowed the human mind with a curious sixth sense for truth. It is slow, this instinct; it burns dimly, but persistently. The famous epigram about fooling the people, attributed to Lincoln, conveys a profound truth.

Another newspaper writer, Charles G. Miller, also strikes a hopeful note:

The press is "coming to" to find its influence upon the people shaken, its freedom restricted, its thinking hampered by coercive propagandists, and its facts still obscured by poisonous publicity flowing from thousands of interested sources.

The press is awaking to duty and opportunity more momentous, more exacting, than it has ever faced before in all its glorious history of great achievements.

The famine in facts must be ended.

The long, deadly drouth of indifference must be broken.

Truth must once more have its place in the sun.

Courageous thought must speak out, unhampered, unafraid.

Independence of Friends and Enemies

Elsewhere we have mentioned the belief of some great editors that friends are a liability to the journalist. Undoubtedly there is danger in too great ambition to be popular. But there is equal objection to an editor's allowing his enemies, or if he has no enemies, allowing his competitors to help edit his paper—to feel obliged to do what they do, or, more likely, to do the opposite. An independence that puts the editor on a level above too many outside considerations, above too much regard for victory or defeat in all undertakings, is the best foundation for abiding self-respect and genuine success.

Independence Then and Now

We are often told that personal journalism was more independent than institutional journalism. Henry Watterson, sometimes described as the last of the great personal journalists, has expressed the opposite opinion. He insists that the old personal journalism was egotistical, autocratic, contentious, partisan, and dominated by the spoils system. These are

hardly the characteristics of true independence. Group participation in the direction of a newspaper is likely to result in greater tolerance than was shown by the great personal editor, but tolerance is not subservience. Fairness is not dependence.

Courage alone will not win independence. Wealth will not insure it. Advertising patronage does not establish it. The only basis of true and lasting independence for a newspaper is the confidence and respect and loyalty of its readers.

CHAPTER VI

THE STRUGGLE FOR IMPARTIALITY AND FAIRNESS

Occasionally an editor seems to feel that his newspaper is his own property to do with as he sees fit; to use in spreading such propaganda as suits his views; to serve as a medium for such half-truths and garbled facts as he decides the public shall have. Such an attitude is not less unprofessional than unbusinesslike. No intelligent merchant regards his business in that light. If he should undertake to carry out such a policy consistently, the law would stop him. A newspaper is more than a business.

Impartiality and fairness plead for recognition in all the relations of a newspaper to the public. We have found them to be involved in questions of suppression of news, distortion by selection or emphasis or editorial color, and newspaper independence; but in certain of their aspects they seem to require special consideration here.

Fairness As to Communications

Opinions differ as to how much a department of communications is worth to a newspaper. In the case of the *London Times*, it became a sort of national institution. In some other newspaper offices it is regarded as both futile and vexatious. That it is a bothersome feature few will deny. It costs something to maintain it. But it places the newspaper in a favorable light before its readers, if judiciously managed, and it discharges a duty to the public comparable with that of expressing honest editorial opinion—the duty of serving as a reflector of the many shades of public sentiment.

Perhaps the most fundamental question in respect to this kind of matter is: How much responsibility does a newspaper assume for opinions or statements of fact in the "Public

Opinion," "Public Mind," "Voice of the People," or "Open Forum" department? Its responsibility for libelous statements appearing therein is well recognized, but how about statements which are merely contrary to the newspaper's views?

CASE.—A man wrote a letter to a newspaper opposing a soldiers' bonus measure advocated by the paper. The communication was not printed, for reasons of policy.

Comment.—The man showed courage in writing the letter, much more courage than would have been required for the newspaper to be fair in handling the question. If a newspaper is to print nothing in its communication column but what it can endorse, it might better abolish the column for there is little virtue in it. An "open forum" is a misnomer for a column from which decent views decently expressed, on any side of almost any question, are excluded. There will not be room for all communications; but fairness will see to it that all points of view get a hearing. A department of communications impartially edited is a fine advertisement of the newspaper's breadth of mind. It seems worth while even if it is not read as much as some other parts of the paper.

CASE.—Occasionally the editor receives a dull communication a column long.

Comment.—It goes into the waste basket or back to the writer. Then, perhaps, the editor receives a protest like the following, recorded by the *Fourth Estate*:

A man in East Boston, on having a letter returned, took shears in hand and for the next two weeks cut from the *Herald* those things, large and small, which he regarded as trivial and unimportant. The resulting bunch of excerpts he promptly transmitted to the editor, with the request that he should look them over to see if it was true that his communication was less important than these.

A former mayor of Boston, noted for his geniality and affability, received back some submitted material "unaccepted," on a certain occasion. A few days later, a man who had toiled so assiduously on another topic as to melt the editor's heart to the extent of giving him half a column, occupied that amount of space with something that was intolerably dull and wholly unimportant. No one realized this better than the editor, but the personal circumstances seemed exceptional. The genial ex-mayor, reading that article, enclosed it, with a letter which said:

"I received the article which you returned the other day, with the intimation that it was not sufficiently important for you to publish. I did not perceive the extent of the compliment until I had read the enclosed which you did print."

But the editor must expect that sort of thing and meet it philosophically.

CASE.—Often the editor receives unsigned communications, in spite of a standing notice explaining that no such letters will be published.

Comment.—The rule against printing anonymous letters is a necessary precautionary measure. The opposite policy would deluge the editor with undesirable matter. Yet an occasional exception may be judicious. Sometimes persons not without courage, and actuated by the best motives, may write unsigned letters. Circumstances may render such a proceeding their only avenue of attack upon evil. Of course, in so doing they are asking the newspaper to shoulder all the responsibility. This may or may not be a fair request. But the editor may be expected to decide the question without assuming the easy attitude of contemptuous indifference towards all such communications.

CASE.—Editors receive communications, signed and unsigned, attacking the policies of the paper. Herbert Bayard Swope, executive editor of the *New York World*, thus states his views on the problem:

What should our attitude be? No man who believes in fair play can regard his paper as other than a forum in which, whether he desires it or not, he is under moral compulsion to give the other fellow just as wide, just as free a swing, as he gives to his own views. That principle we must accept as elementary and axiomatic. But are we to continue day after day, to reprint vicious, baseless assaults. . . . I believe we should not be so free in printing such things. . . . Also, it seems to me that it is the part of wisdom to print, not in the editorial column, but interpretatively in the news column, a bald, simple, comprehensive, accurate statement of the fact surrounding the attacks.

Comment.—The simplest way to solve such a problem is, of course, to take the view that it is beyond reason to ask a newspaper to assist in diminishing its own prestige or its effective-

ness in promoting a given policy. But the easiest way is not always the most attractive to the editor who likes to play the game with the utmost fairness to his adversary. The strategic advantages of his position are tremendous as compared with the strength of any individual critic. He can usually afford to be magnanimous—and even gain prestige thereby. An editorial reply following the communication may be desirable, or it may be wiser to trust the public to reach a correct judgment, without comment in defense. If the newspaper is in the wrong, the chances are that the public is aware of the fact already and will admire the courage of a tacit or expressed admission.

CASE.—Sometimes a communication presents an interesting point of view but does not present it clearly or concisely nor even in good English.

Comment.—The most effective answer that can be made to some arguments is to print them just as they are written. As to the fairness of so doing there may be some question. The right, even the duty, of a newspaper to correct grammatical errors in communications can hardly be questioned. Does this carry with it the privilege of editing for rhetorical effect or shortening by elision or condensation?

The answer that seems to be dictated by fairness and impartiality is that editing must be done in such a way as not to change the significance of the letter, and that more freedom in editing is permissible when the communication is to be published over a pen name than when the real name of the writer is to be used.

CASE.—Most editors exclude from the “public opinion column” matter liable to provoke controversy involving religious subjects, race prejudice, and other topics touching closely upon the deeper convictions that people hold.

Comment.—Controversy in itself is not a bad thing provided it is kept within the bounds of good taste and also provided it is closed before it becomes wearisome. Baiting the public is sometimes a stimulus to much interesting and profitable discussion. Some conductors of paragraph columns get their best stuff in this manner. So, an editorial may be written designedly to feed the department of communications by provocation of argument. Sometimes a letter which might be

construed by some one as an attack upon him should be submitted to the person concerned before publication. The editor ought to be reasonably sure as to how far and in what direction the discussion will lead, before he decides to let it start.

CASE.—A communication printed over a pseudonym contained statements which a reader of the paper regarded as damaging to his interests. He demanded the name of the contributor in order that he might bring action against him. The editor felt that his communicant was in the right and refused to give his name, preferring to shield him from annoyance. He told the complainant to sue the paper instead, knowing that he had no case.

Comment.—The editor had the privilege, perhaps, of pursuing a Quixotic course like this; but, generally speaking, no inviolable secrecy attaches to the authorship of communications. The names may be withheld from publication, but they are accessible to any inquirer.

These cases are typical and are indicative of the varieties of problems that hover about the department of communications.

Fairness to "The Opposition"

It is easy enough for an editor to give assent to the proposition that he ought to treat his opponents fairly—be a "fair fighter." Fairness in the abstract is a beautiful thing. Fairness in the concrete is not always so attractive. One's opponents do not usually seem obsessed with the idea of being fair; the public does not seem to applaud fairness as loudly as it does a smashing pugnacity. The recipient of fair treatment, and the bystander also, sometimes interpret fairness as a sign of weakness, of being "on the fence." But the man who faces such discouragements courageously wins a measure of self approval and thus at least finds to what extent fairness is its own reward.

Presenting Both Sides of a Matter in Controversy

That theory of news handling which leads some editors to refuse to let the facts spoil a good story leads them likewise

to refuse to let fairness weaken a good "wallop." From the standpoint of a business office, interested mainly in circulation, this may be a good policy; it certainly is not a good policy from the standpoint of newspaper influence.

CASE.—A newspaper was supporting a proposal to build a concrete highway through its county. As is usual in such cases, many taxpayers opposed the project on the ground that it would not benefit their property, situated some distance from the road. The town in which the newspaper was published strongly favored the undertaking. When the two rural members of the board of county commissioners defeated the proposal presented to the board, the newspaper published a sensational story placing the two members in the light of being blind reactionaries.

Comment.—Even in fighting for so worthy a cause as good roads, fairness to the opposition is not only good ethics but good policy. It is the policy most likely to win in the long run. In this instance, the rural commissioners were representing sentiment in their districts. They were entitled to an opportunity to state their side of the case. If they refused to embrace the opportunity, the paper could have found some one else to speak for the negative side of the question. For the sake of the paper itself it was desirable that the news columns present both sides. The editorial columns afforded the proper avenue for criticism of the acts of the public officials concerned.

CASE.—Among the pro-slavery papers in the North, few were more outspoken than the New York *Herald*, and yet that paper is credited with having printed remarkably complete and uncolored accounts of antislavery meetings.

Comment.—It is not necessary, of course, to go back three-quarters of a century to get a conspicuous example of fairness. Few newspapers exclude an important aspect of any controversial matter. Reporters are instructed to "get both sides." In a large proportion of cases the newspaper has no occasion to be anything but neutral as to the points at issue. In another large class of cases it realizes that among its readers are a sufficient number of adherents to both sides of the controversy to render fairness a matter of good business policy as well as

good ethics. In yet other cases newspapers manifest genuine conscientiousness as to impartiality in the news columns. The responsible newspaper frequently delays publication of a story until it can be covered from some angle not represented in the original report. Grounds for suppression of news often disappear when it is evident that the news is comprehensive and fair.

CASE.—A metropolitan newspaper was conducting a vigorous local campaign for a civic measure. Readers of the paper who lived far enough from the city to have no direct knowledge of the situation were impressed with the overwhelming arguments in favor both of the proposed undertaking and of the men who were candidates for office on the platform advocated by the paper. It seemed particularly clear that all the women of the city would favor the measure, at least all the women of the better districts. When the election brought overwhelming defeat to the paper's cause, in the better residence wards as well as in the rest of the city, and when an analysis of the vote showed that the women had been on the other side, some outside readers of the paper were greatly mystified. The explanation was simple. The paper had consistently presented a totally unfair view of the issues, following its usual methods in such cases.

Comment.—An example of the dynamic ideal gone to seed. The newspaper was sincere in its belief as to which side ought to win. But at that point it forsook reason and judgment. Its pride in being a strong fighter blinded it to the most elementary principle of effective debate—the principle of giving full weight to the opposing arguments. People cannot long retain confidence in the man or newspaper which seems to see only one side of a question. The leadership of such is not to be trusted. The newspaper in this case is one of the finest in the country; but its direct influence is not great. In a hotly contested campaign its policy of trying to herd its readers—make up their minds for them—deliver them at the polls nicely tied up in one big bundle, is disastrous, for the natural inclination of human nature is to resent and resist such methods. Such an advocate satisfies for a time, even delights, those who are on the same side; but most of them recognize its unfairness though they may view this with complacency for the time being. Their satisfaction, however, is merely the pugnacious

feeling of joy at seeing rocks hurled at the enemy. It is not the respect accorded to real leadership.

CASE.—A Republican newspaper in a town of fifteen thousand inhabitants absorbed its Democratic rival thus obtaining a monopoly of the field. The editor was urged, in the interests of harmony, to make his paper neutral in politics. This he declined to do; but he set aside two columns in which he printed the comment of an "editor" chosen by the Democratic leaders in the community. He did not censor the opposition copy nor directly assail the views expressed in it. For two years the plan seemed to give general satisfaction. It was discontinued when the "opposition editor" grew tired of his job and no one was found to take his place.

Comment.—Theoretically the plan is sound enough; but it does not seem to recommend itself in practice. Perhaps the trouble lies in the unwillingness of the opposition group, political or otherwise, to seem to be beneficiaries of the magnanimity of the editor, with a consequent loss of dignity. This reluctance is not so evident in nonpolitical affairs. When, for example, an issue is drawn as to the advisability of the purchase of a public utility by the city, the advocates of the view opposed to that of the newspaper will often make free use of the privileges of an open form. For the purposes of such an attempt to discover the community interests, the newspaper is seemingly regarded as itself a public utility—a common carrier of opinion.

Another form of fairness to opponents, closely allied with granting them space in the news or editorial columns of the paper, is willingness to sell them space in the advertising columns.

CASE.—In the national political campaign in which the League of Nations was an issue, a newspaper refused to sell advertising space to the opposition on the ground that it *must* refuse advertising which it regarded as untrue.

Comment.—A specious argument revealing a narrow mind and an absence of a sense of social obligation. That the publisher who excludes advertising of impure drugs and foods, worthless preparations and adulterated products should also exclude that which is liable to act as poison to the mind, is plain

enough. But that he should undertake to put a poison label on this or that political doctrine advanced by responsible persons or groups is ludicrous. And yet this form of journalistic bigotry is not uncommon. It is usually cloaked under some such plea as the following:

A newspaper should not be so inconsistent as to advocate one thing in its editorial columns and another in its advertising columns.

Opposition advertising in a newspaper makes it appear that the paper has "sold out," or is at least mercenary, if not venal.

A paper owes undivided allegiance to the cause it decides to support.

Either the advertising hurts the interests advocated by the paper or the paper is in the position of taking money for advertising which it knows will do the buyer no good.

Subscribers to a newspaper have chosen it because it represents their views. They have a right to expect that it will be consistent in its attorneyship for their favorite ideas.

All of which sound well enough until tested by the simplest rule of conduct for any newspaper that realizes it ought to pay rent for the space that society allows it to occupy. Doubtless the public does want a partisan newspaper, but not a paper that insults the reader's intelligence by undertaking to protect him from the views of other people, and that defrauds him by giving him only half of the news about any controversial matter.

CASE.—In April, 1916, a prominent pacifist in this country offered a page advertisement on "Humanity and Sanity" to a vigorous newspaper exponent of preparedness. Everything in the page was opposed to the policies advocated by the paper. The paper accepted the advertisement and printed it without comment.

Comment.—The decent and fair thing to do. It is a weak cause that must be won by suppressing or concealing the arguments against it.

CASE.—An organization of public utilities offered a country editor an advertising contract for space in which to present its reasons for asking certain concessions from the public. The editor refused to sell the space on the ground that he was not familiar enough with the questions involved to give the

public the other side of the matter through the news or editorial columns and did not wish to turn his paper into an organ of propaganda.

Comment.—The decision was quite in line with the function of a newspaper to give the public the facts on both sides plus such interpretation as the editor feels competent to offer. But the editor's inability to serve the community in this instance, except in a negative manner, must be pointed to as a journalistic breakdown at the very point of the newspaper's greatest professional importance.

CASE.—A candidate for mayor of a city distributed, on the morning of election day, posters presenting his platform and explaining that he was using posters and handbills because the matter had been refused for publication in the newspapers. The statement was denied by the papers. One of them had not been approached in the matter and the other had offered to print the statement as advertising matter, having once printed it as news earlier in the campaign.

Comment.—An attempt to gain sympathy through charging the newspapers with doing the sort of thing that the public seems inclined to suspect them of doing. Nothing but the most careful efforts to avoid even the appearance of unfairness can win that public confidence on which newspaper influence rests.

Attitude in Victory and in Defeat

Not infrequently it seems that people are not very good sports and that in controversial matters fairness, along with generosity, is out of place. Who thinks anything about good taste in a fight? What cause was ever won by tolerance? The hard hitter gets the cheers—the man who exults boastfully in victory, and in defeat professes to see retaliation coming swiftly to his hand.

Undoubtedly we are yet primitive in many things, but it is hard to see why a man who would call it crude to boast of victory in a private matter, and who would feel contempt for a poor loser should sanction such performances by a newspaper. Many editors do not sanction them. Some of the maxims formulated in response to inquiries as to how a news-

paper should conduct itself in defeat and in victory are rich in practical wisdom:

1. I recommend a generous amount of silence. It makes friends for the paper—strengthens its influence. Once in a while a little bragging after a victory may do no harm, but the credit to the paper ought always to be assigned by some one else. In defeat—silence! I have never seen an “alibi” accomplish anything.

2. Nobody has any respect for a quitter. When you are licked, make it plain you expect to live to fight again some other day. But that doesn't mean exhibiting a lot of sore spots.

3. Don't be afraid to accord a little recognition to the winner—even when that does not happen to be yourself.

4. When you lose, be a good sport. But that doesn't mean that you can lose all the time and build up prestige. It is not a bad idea to start something once in a while on which you are sure of winning. Treat yourself to a victory now and then. People just naturally can't help “handing it” to a winner.

5. A paper never gains much by “playing down” the victory of an opponent, or claiming a foul. It is better to face the facts. Only a weakling is afraid to admit defeat.

6. Obviously the only hope of turning a defeat into a subsequent victory at the next election is by gaining support from some of the opposition forces. This can best be done by such a bearing as will win the admiration of fair-minded men and induce them to give reconsideration to the question at issue. Remarks that make them angry or disgusted will hardly accomplish this. Venting one's feelings is a natural procedure; but other people have feelings too. They can not usually be driven as easily as they can be persuaded.

Fairness in Matters Involving a Newspaper Policy

Some newspapers, being human, find it difficult to see any good in the person or the cause to which their policies are opposed. The weakness and narrowness of such unfairness is brought into sharp relief by contrast with conspicuous examples of the opposite procedure.

CASE.—A newspaper which was for years a vigorous opponent of President Roosevelt, never failed to praise him highly for acts that conformed to the paper's ideas as to good public policy.

Comment.—Only a few intolerant or fanatical readers of the paper accused it of inconsistency. It gained friends and influence by its fairness.

CASE.—A newspaper that had consistently fought a public service corporation gave due acknowledgment of improvements in the service and commended the management.

Comment.—There were those, of course, who cried that the paper had been “bought,” but they were the sort of persons whose influence is limited to the first person singular.

CASE.—Between 1921 and 1923 some 165 financial houses failed in New York City, in practically every case causing total loss to the customers involved. The failure of one house made an especially good story: eleven thousand workers had put their savings, a dollar at a time, into the enterprise, and now it was in the hands of the state banking department. The directors of the company were well and favorably known in big banking circles. It was asserted that the investment of the workers had been well safeguarded by a trust fund and the directors insisted that no one would lose a cent, but that it might take a year to liquidate and pay back. The story was handled by one paper in the following manner: the fact that eleven thousand workers were involved was played up, and the general effect of the story was to strengthen the suspicion that Wall Street was out to “skin” the working man any way it could. The facts were—and were obvious—that at the very worst, the workers could not lose more than ten per cent, and in all likelihood would lose nothing—which proved to be the case. In other words, the newspaper classed the failed concern with the bucket shops; preferred a sensational, routine “bucket-shop loss” story to what the story actually was, namely, a unique occurrence in the 1919-1921 depression, a financial failure that paid out one hundred cents on the dollar.

Comment.—A case in which the standing policy of the paper—doubtless a good general policy, from the point of view of the public interest—was permitted to work great unfairness to one concern.

CASE.—A newspaper decided to make a campaign to force the resignation of the superintendent of an insane asylum concerning whose conduct damaging rumors were in circulation. A reporter was sent to get a story that might serve as the opening gun in the fight. The reporter was treated with courtesy by the superintendent, given every opportunity to

investigate the charges, and encouraged to look into all phases of the management of the institution. He went back convinced that the superintendent was a capable man wronged by malicious tongues.

As a result of the reporter's presentation of the case, the paper changed its policy to one of endorsement of the superintendent.

Comment.—A refreshing instance among the many that might be given of an opposite character in which reporters are sent out with orders to get a certain story regardless of the facts—a story that will bolster up the case which the paper has undertaken to establish without consideration for fairness or truth.

Disparity in Size As Affecting Fairness

That it behooves a strong man to be scrupulously fair to a weaker man is a commonplace of honorable conduct. But the great disparity in size between most newspapers and most men often seems to be disregarded by the former in favor of a ruthlessness that begets resentment in the heart of every believer in fair play. Charles H. Grasty, an experienced journalist, recently said in an article in the *Atlantic Monthly*:

I have never been able to understand why newspapers with a high standard of public duty should be so lacking in ordinary decency to the individual. . . . I believe that much of the cynical attitude towards newspapers arises from newspaper disregard of what is due from the press to the individual. Many men who in their private relations would not think of doing deliberate injustice, show in their conduct of newspapers a Hunnish contempt for the rights of the individual.

CASE.—A woman, returned from a visit to the Orient, praised the Chinese costume for women as being artistic and comfortable. A Sunday paper quoted her as advising its adoption in the United States and faked a picture of her dressed in such garb.

Comment.—Inaccuracy and faking almost always violate the rights of individuals.

CASE.—A woman, exhorting a meeting to take up a certain program vigorously during the ensuing few days, said jokingly

that husbands and families should be allowed to look out for themselves. She was reported as saying vehemently that husbands and children must be neglected for the more important things.

Comment.—Worthy causes often suffer through unfairness to the individual who happens to be a leader.

CASE.—A serious blunder was made in transmission of a noted foreign correspondent's story, making him appear wholly unreliable. His most urgent appeal that he be set right with the readers of the papers carrying the story was ignored by most of the editors to whom he sent it.

Comment.—Showing a willingness to damage an innocent man in his means of livelihood, notwithstanding the fact that the means in this case was journalism.

The Crusading Spirit

Much has been said in criticism and in defense of the crusading newspaper's habit of centering its fight on some individual rather than on the logical aspects of the case.

"It is the newspaper yielding to human nature's brutal demand for a victim to be sacrificed," declares the critic.

"It is the only way the newspaper can get the sluggish public aroused in a good cause. Evil in the concrete is the only kind the public will take measures to suppress," answers the defender of the crusading paper.

Fairness to the individual hardly seems to be the question involved. To be sure, one person—the "goat"—suffers more than others equally guilty. But the fact of his guilt stands in justification of punishment. The others may have their turn later. No law could be enforced if enforcement were to be delayed until all violaters could be punished equally.

Not infrequently the individual chosen for attack by the crusading newspaper is as powerful in his way as is the newspaper. Real courage may be required to make the attack, much more courage than would be required to attack evil in general.

CASE.—A newspaper in a large city found that many criminals were escaping punishment through the machinations of

crooked lawyers, in collusion with judges who were a part of the "system." In addition to showing up the general aspects of the situation, the paper selected an individual lawyer and an individual judge as "horrible examples," and lost no opportunity to keep the public advised of their services to the underworld. These names came to stand for the system by which protection was accorded to criminals in that city.

Comment.—The two men, selected as representatives of their types, received, relatively, an undue amount of attention, but really no more than they deserved. The newspaper was justified in using the best means of getting the public mind to apprehend the situation.

So, a newspaper that is making a fight for an increase in property valuation for purposes of taxation is likely to take a specific case of undervaluation—a particular man who has been a consistent evader of taxation—and relate its campaign to that case or individual. Indeed, almost any movement for reform or change is likely to proceed along those lines. Not strictly impartial, admittedly. Yet not entirely unfair; and in most cases justified by difficulties which a newspaper meets in attempting to win response from the lethargic public.

The tendency of the larger paper to become specific is in contrast with that of the smaller paper to avoid such concreteness, because of the greater expensiveness to the small paper of the luxury of making enemies.

The temptation for a newspaper to be unfair to an individual is largely removed from a judicious editor by the fact that, however unfair the public may become in moments of mass excitement, it usually comes to its senses before long and resents having been tricked into doing injustice. The newspaper with its longer reach and greater striking force is "out of luck" if it comes to be known as a bully and a bruiser.

The "Blacklist"

A negative form of unfairness by a newspaper towards individuals is popularly described as blacklisting and consists in excluding the news relative to blacklisted persons. An

actual blacklist written out for the guidance of a newspaper staff would be a curiosity worthy of a place in any museum of journalism. Possibly no such list ever existed. But the practice of blacklisting is widespread and is sometimes frankly defended.

CASE.—A candidate for mayor, opposed by a newspaper, made a physical assault on the editor in the heat of a bitter campaign. From that time on he and his family ceased to exist for that paper.

Comment.—Such advertisement of an editor's pettiness of mind is usually prevented by a sense of pride in being regarded as "broad-minded." But in less obvious ways the same policy is often followed.

Fairness in the news columns towards a personal enemy of the editor goes against the flesh and, to this extent, deserves praise. Yet such a policy hardly merits being described as generous. It is "big" only in the sense that it shows the editor's ability to see his obligations to the public, to see his newspaper as a common carrier of news, and to see that exclusion of his enemy's name, when it becomes news, is short-weighting his readers.

CASE.—A new reporter on a newspaper in a town of 50,000 people picked up an interesting story which embodied an interview with a business man of the town. When he turned in the story he was told by another reporter that the man was on the blacklist because he refused to advertise in the paper. The story did not appear in print. The reporter avoided that news source.

Comment.—An absurd and unprofitable policy for a newspaper to follow. News can not fairly be subjected to the test of friendship or enmity nor the news columns conceived of as the branches of a Christmas tree in which the bad children must find no recognition.

CASE.—In his farewell sermon to his city congregation, a minister of some note, both as preacher and writer, said: "One of the reasons I am loath to leave this city is that I shall not be here to see the overthrow of the most extraordinary jour-

nalistic despotism that ever held a city in its grasp. I have never seen a paper to equal this one in its ineffable pettiness. I have fought it fairly and squarely and openly on matters of public policy. Lately I have officiated at a number of funerals, some of them of people of municipal importance and social importance. The funeral notices have appeared—with my name carefully deleted.”

Comment.—Regardless of whether or not such a policy is destructive of newspaper influence through its obvious unfairness, how can any editor derive satisfaction from doing things that subject him to pity and contempt?

CASE.—A man became a “hound for publicity,” and when he did not get what he conceived to be due notice, he made raucous outcry. The paper applied heroic measures by refusing to print his name for a year.

Comment.—Publicity-seekers of this sort, though usually mild cases—pitiful rather than annoying—are to be found in every community. An exceptional case may justify exceptional treatment, but not to nullify the general rule that news is judged as to its news value without prejudice because of its origin.

Fairness Towards Officials

Members of legislative bodies, executives of government, and political leaders are often heard to denounce the unfairness of newspapers towards themselves. “As soon as a man takes office,” they complain, “he becomes the target for unfair newspaper attack questioning his motives and impugning his judgment.”

The reply of the newspaper is that the press is the eye of the public through which officials must be watched if they are to be held to account at all, and that it is better that many honest officials shall be subjected to needless scrutiny than that one dishonest person should betray the public with impunity. Reversing the dictum of the courts, many newspapers hold that every man who enters public life should be held potentially guilty of unfaithfulness until he is proved innocent, and that only as the press performs its function of directing a searchlight upon the acts and motives of public men is there

any hope of success for the experiment of democratic government. A definition of the newspaper offered by Robert R. McCormick, co-editor of the *Chicago Tribune*, may well be quoted here with special reference to the last clause:

A newspaper is a daily publication conducted for profit; an instrument created by modern civilization to convey to the public the news of the day, while promoting commerce through advertisements, and to furnish that check upon government which no constitution has been able to provide.

The statesman's complaint as to the unfairness of the press is clearly presented in an article written for the *World's Work* by David Lloyd George in the course of which he said:

What happens to the politician who blunders in act or speech? He wakes up one morning and finds from his newspaper that his error is blazoned forth to the world, and he is principally conscious of the fact that at that moment there are millions of his fellow countrymen either abusing him, cursing him, or, what is still worse, laughing at him. I have seen men who had faced death and torture in every form quail and shrink before ridicule, for the corrosive shafts of ridicule burn and gnaw into our very tissues. The poor politician has to endure it through life, and when he reads of his mistake and of the use which is made of it he knows he will never hear the end of it. He will again and again be reproached with it and when his unfortunate stumble is published to the world he realizes that fate has tied another knot in the lash with which the furies flog his lacerated back through life. There is no profession which is carried on under such exacting, irritating, and mortifying conditions. Just imagine what would happen if a barrister or a clergyman or a doctor had to discharge the duties attached to their exalted professions under the conditions which afflict the life of the politician.

Let us take the case, first of all, of the barrister. He has to conduct a very difficult and complicated case in court. He does his best for his client, puts the whole of his strength and ability into the presentation of his case. A real aptitude for the study and practice of the law and a life of industrious application to its duties have given him proficiency. He has worked hard at this particular brief, all the experience and accumulated skill of a lifetime, added to no mean natural gifts, are all placed at the disposal of the man whose cause he is pleading. Nevertheless the following morning this is the kind of comment which would, if he were treated like

politicians, appear in the press which happened to be hostile to him and to his cause:

"The opening of the case of *Brown v. Robinson* by Mr. Ernest Pleader, K. C., yesterday, was by universal consent to say the least, disappointing. As we have repeatedly pointed out in these columns, the plaintiff's case at best is a bad one, but Mr. Pleader made the worst of a bad case. We are aware that a knowledge of law and its principles are not his strong point, but we credited him with the possession of a vein of crude emotionalism which appeals to a certain type of petty juror. Yesterday, however, even that resource failed him completely. He emptied galleries attracted by the interest of the case. The jury looked with envious eyes at those who were free to depart. His cross-examination was hectoring without being effective. Buzfuz at least won his case. Pleader lost his. We are not surprised that the popularity of this well-known advocate which was always confined to a certain class of client and case—not by any means the highest—is waning, even in that quarter."

That is not an unfair parallel to the criticism to which politicians are subjected. There are probably few men who could have done it better than poor Pleader, and they are certainly not amongst the critics; and the men who could do it better were probably engaged on other causes and were there subjected to exactly the same kind of criticism.

May I dare to imagine the kind of paragraph that would be written about great surgeons:

"We are loth to dwell on the horrible scenes that were enacted yesterday at the operating theatre of St. Blank's, when Sir Ruthless Cutter performed what ought to have been a perfectly simple operation in a manner which would have disgraced a mere novice. We hate using the word butchery, but the English language in all its opulence can furnish us with no other equally appropriate."

Then come the clergy. Here I will quote headlines only, for the whole article would be too long for quotation. These are the large headlines in a popular paper in reference to the minister of a church whose doctrines and traditions are obnoxious to the paper in which these comments appear. The first is a report of the Sunday morning sermon. "Even the Deacons Yawn;" "Why Sleep at Home?" The next is "An Emptying Church"; the next is "Moral Condition of Parish Deteriorating Under New Regime." Then comes the turn of the missionary, and these are the headlines: "Appalling Waste on Cannibals;" the next, "Clear Out of the Solomon Islands."

The protest is highly entertaining but does not dispose of the newspaper as a quasi-official observer and critic. Pun-

gency of comment is not ruled out by fairness. It is necessary to win a hearing from the more indifferent. Spice is generally a legitimate ingredient of the journalistic pudding—as it is of Lloyd George's.

In this connection, we have been reminded by Frank I. Cobb that Thomas Jefferson said once in a letter: "The spirit of resistance to government is so valuable on certain occasions that I wish it always to be kept alive. It will often be exercised when wrong, but better so than not to be exercised at all." Criticism of government is surely a mild and salutary form of "resistance."

The chief executive of a large city, when congratulated because a newspaper that had been bitterly unfriendly to him had passed into friendly hands, answered that he could not accept congratulations:

For years, the paper has called me everything almost, personally and professionally; but the "panning" frequently did me good.

They might say some things I thought, or knew, to be unjust. But, nevertheless, down under the surface, their attacks gave me food for thought and frequently I got busy and corrected the fault.

In my opinion, adverse or hostile newspaper criticism is nearly always a good thing for the official or individual or corporation which gets it. Frankly I'd hate to live in a community where the newspapers were afraid to criticise or attack or didn't care to criticise or attack anybody.

CASE.—During a political campaign a newspaper put a question of fairness and duty up to its readers in the form of a statement to the effect that the paper had copies of court records showing that one of the candidates for a county office had once been indicted for murder following upon the heels of a scandal in which he had been one of the principals. "Is there an obligation resting on a newspaper in such circumstances to tear the veil from hypocrisy?" it asked.

Comment.—Since there was no record of conviction, any attack by the paper must needs be based on the theory that the editor had an opinion as to the guilt of the man in the case, superior to the judgment of the court. Rather doubtful ground. Very likely the readers of the paper advised it to go ahead with its denunciation of the candidate. Many people

are exceeding bold, even ruthless, in their pursuit and exposure of suspicious circumstances—by proxy.

The question of attacking public men through their private lives is not so much one of fairness as one of judiciousness. Generally the journalistic verdict has been given against the publication of gossip or scandal, on the ground that the chances favor the victim of such publication, through public sympathy. One newspaper known as a vigorous fighter in every local campaign made this editorial statement of its policy as to personalities:

There are two things on which this paper insists. One is that it never resorts to personalities in any political fight. . . . It is concerned with public officials only in their public capacity; only as they make themselves instruments for what it conceives are good or bad policies. . . . There have been plenty of vulnerable men who have blackguarded this newspaper. It never has retorted with the ammunition that lay ready to use concerning the black-guarder's private affairs. It always confines itself strictly to the public record. If an official is a bad public servant, if he is dishonest, or inefficient, or politically corrupt, this paper says so. It never falls back on the personal innuendoes that are the favorite weapon of so many politicians.

CASE.—A promoter of a reform movement sued an editor for calling him hard names such as "crank." The supreme court, in sustaining a decision in favor of the newspaper, said: "In the struggle of civilized society for higher ideals of law and government, there is a constant and legitimate warfare. Some degree of vituperation must be tolerated in the interest of the larger peace of the community."

Comment.—No broad statement as to the fairness of personal abuse of a public man would "hold water," partly because of the absence of any accepted definition of personal abuse. Statements which the recipient calls abusive are described by the projector as merely critical. There seems to be no fault to find with the common remark that a newspaper should be a gentleman; but it is not clear that a gentleman may not utter a little innuendo now and then, or even a few remarks colored by satire or irony, or the stronger and rougher expressions of sarcasm, or, with proper curative intent, ridicule, and even, in extreme cases, invective.

CASE.—In one issue of a newspaper appeared a story about a politician's offense against good taste, for which he was called to account in an embarrassing manner, and another story about an admirable piece of community service by the same man.

Comment.—An ideal exemplification of fairness—by the unthinking likely to be mistaken for on-the-fence weakness.

CASE.—A reporter had developed a feud with a county official. He saw an opportunity, in some charges filed with the county board, to even the score and handed in the story without giving the official an opportunity to make an explanation.

Comment.—The reporter was called to account both for failure to extend the ordinarily fair and decent treatment to the official attacked, and for using the paper as a weapon with which to wreak personal vengeance. A reporter without journalistic education might make such a blunder and be excusable on the ground of thoughtlessness, but one from a school of journalism could do it only in deliberate violation of what he knew to be good practice.

Perhaps the most difficult achievement in respect to impartiality is for a newspaper to convince its public that it is relatively fair to different groups—not protecting certain men because they "belong" while pillorying certain other men, no worse, who do not "belong."

CASE.—A dominating newspaper of a great city and state conducted a long and bitter campaign against a governor of the state based on charges of corruption in office. At the same time it was silent as regards other notorious cases of public plundering and political irregularity. The paper was charged with pursuing a policy of persecution for those who did not belong to its "gang."

Comment.—A newspaper can not scatter its fire too much. It must make selection among the several opportunities for a crusade that offer themselves. The law is not called unfair because it punishes only the criminals who are caught. Without knowing the multitude of facts necessary to warrant an opinion in the foregoing case, it may safely be said that the

fact that the paper pursued one suspected man, and not all, does not convict it of insincerity or unfairness.

Fairness Towards Competitors

The question of how a newspaper shall treat its competitors is more than a question of private relationships, because the public is made a party to all such matters through being compelled to read about them. A newspaper war is a public affair—usually a public nuisance. Professional courtesy between newspapers is an object lesson to the rest of the community. A happy mean, which seems to be about as much as can be expected in the present state of human nature, is the newspaper's complete obliviousness to the existence of competitors. Not always strictly fair, probably, but more nearly fair than any printed reference is likely to be.

CASE.—A young man bought a paper in a small town where two papers were being published. After he had been running the paper for a few months, his competitor, without provocation, began a campaign of personal abuse directed at him. Ridicule of his personal appearance and insinuations as to his morals formed part of the attacks. The young man made no reply. Many people seemed to enjoy the prospect of a "fight," and often asked the young editor why he did not "go after" his assailant.

Comment.—A typical example of the beginning of the traditional newspaper "war," unworthy of any editor; unfair to the public.

CASE.—A newspaper started a "Pure Food Department" under the direction of an expert and adopted standards for its food advertising higher than required by law. Within five years two other papers in the same city had established similar food departments. The same paper inaugurated as a special feature a page of school news and became the quasi-official organ for many thousands of school teachers. In a few years two others papers started similar pages. This same newspaper began publishing a radio page and weekly supplement, only to be imitated by four of its competitors within a short time.

Comment.—A newspaper fair enough to announce that it was introducing a feature because its competitor had demon-

strated the value of such a department would be regarded as "queer." Nor does imitation necessarily involve any infringement of rights—legal rights, at least. Nevertheless, willingness to give credit where due makes strong appeal to people with a normal sense of fair play.

CASE.—A newspaper announced the projected publication of a fiftieth anniversary edition, an industrial survey of the territory during the fifty-year period. A competing paper thereupon prepared and issued, on the same day as the first paper, a "fiftieth anniversary edition" ignoring two or three gaps in its early history when no paper was published. The first paper refrained, with some difficulty, from accusing its competitor of unfairness and misrepresentation.

Comment.—Change of ownership is not regarded as breaking the continuity in a newspaper's life, nor the omission of an issue or two, nor even a change in name. Just how radical a change or combination of changes puts a stop to its existence beyond the possibility of resurrection is hard to determine. But in the foregoing case no consideration of fairness need have deterred the first paper from printing historical facts in protest. A question of business expediency, however, might well have warranted its decision to say nothing.

Fair treatment of a newspaper competitor, with regard to his mistakes, his misfortunes, his triumphs, and his policies, is affected sometimes by the relative strength of the papers. A weaker competitor may deserve different treatment from a stronger one. It may also be affected by the size of the town and such other circumstances as number, age, and affiliations of the papers in the field. The safest general rule, in the words of a veteran editor, is "Mind your own business; let the other fellow strictly alone." Or, as expressed by another: "The best answer to an attack by the 'esteemed but loathed contemporary' is—silence."

Fairness in Correcting Errors

When the editor of almost any sort of newspaper explains his policy as to making corrections, his statement is likely to be liberal enough to satisfy almost any critic. But when he

proceeds to put his policy into practice, the critics are anything but content. And the critics in this matter are numerous enough to constitute a respectable proportion of the newspaper-reading public.

The practice of correcting errors in the news columns—we are not now concerned with errors of opinion which raise the troublesome question of editorial consistency—may appear to be a minor matter and yet it is one constantly affecting a newspaper's prestige and good will. Practice in regard to corrections, either through mere restatement, or through admission of error, or direct apology, or through publication of letters, is so varied as to be confusing to the public, while at the same time suggesting that editors themselves are not clear in the matter, have not studied it carefully, do not appreciate its importance, have not compared each other's individual notions about it so that they might approach a uniform guiding standard.

Editors' Views As to Making Corrections

Let us go to original sources for the opinions of editors and also for opinions from the reading public, and note the divergence between the two points of view, as regards practice if not theory.

Some of the typical answers given by editors to the question, "Under what circumstances do you correct errors in your news columns?" are as follows:

1. Our paper takes every possible precaution against errors in its news columns, and, where such occur, immediately and cheerfully corrects them. In some cases we become aware of the error before the person concerned. In such an event the correction is made as a matter of good taste, without waiting for a protest.
2. This paper corrects every error appearing in its news columns as soon as determined.
3. If you are wrong, the best way is to acknowledge it, not to avoid a libel suit, nor to encourage one; the idea simply being that it is the right and decent thing to do. Pride and stubbornness don't mean anything but grief.
4. The question of correcting errors that appear in the columns of a paper is an important one. If a newspaper is to have any reputation for good faith—and without such a reputation it ought to

be wholly devoid of any influence—it must be punctilious in the correction of errors which appear in its columns.

5. It is the policy of this paper to correct any article that we find to be in error. In carrying out this policy we not only correct all errors that should be corrected but I believe we correct a great many that should not be corrected because the statements were true in the first place, but through difficulty in proving the facts corrections are printed.

6. We desire to impress on our readers that we are glad to confess our errors.

7. We are very solicitous about the damage that a powerful newspaper like ours can do to an innocent person, and we try to put ourselves in his position. Any person desiring a correction or a re-statement of facts, even though the matter be not libelous, is always received in this office with the utmost sympathy and friendliness.

Such expressions from individual editors might be quoted indefinitely. Moreover editors collectively have put themselves on record to the same effect. Only recently the American Society of Newspaper Editors adopted this as one of its canons of journalism:

It is the privilege, as it is the duty, of a newspaper to make prompt and complete correction of its own serious mistakes of fact or opinion, whatever their origin.

The Public Thinks Otherwise

Such being the declared views of editors—the foregoing are certainly representative, coming as they do from the directing heads of newspapers both conservative and sensational, great and small—how does it happen that newspaper readers are usually found to be not only unaware of any such attitude on the editor's part but fully convinced that his attitude is quite the opposite?

Any one who doubts that this is the prevailing opinion of newspaper readers need only ask a few of them in order to be convinced that the general practice of newspapers in the matter of handling corrections is not satisfactory to the public. That it would be possible to give complete satisfaction is of course doubtful. A perfect newspaper, entirely free from mistakes, would still be accused of error because people see things

differently and can seldom agree on any statement of fact except by liberal compromises.

But, making all due allowance for unreasonable demands, it yet remains clear that the editor who is interested in the problem of a newspaper's influence and its possession of the confidence and good will of the public needs to consider sympathetically the complaints made as to newspapers' lack of fairness in making corrections—criticism both spoken and unspoken, the latter not less intense but suppressed because of timidity or because of a sense of the futility of complaining.

Those who have uttered such strictures publicly have not always been strangers to the inside workings of a newspaper office. Washington Gladden, who beheld the fair fame of his life work and the earning power of his pen compromised by an incorrect news dispatch telling the world that he was resigning his pastorate because his pews were empty, in giving voice to his condemnation of the inadequate efforts to undo the damage, spoke from the vantage point of one who had known journalism from the inside.

The man who, in an important American magazine, characterized the behavior of some newspapers in the matter of correcting errors as barbarous and devoid of any sense of justice or decency in the treatment of the individual, was himself a distinguished foreign correspondent of a New York paper with years of experience as reporter, editor, and publisher of a metropolitan daily, Charles H. Grasty.

Satirical attacks by a college professor, as, for example, that of Munroe Smith, pointing out that what he called the "dogma of journalistic inerrancy" must be pursued in Machiavelian fashion, as a matter of safety, and that the virtue of fairness in dealing with corrections, while not to be adopted seriously, should be assumed by making, say, "an annual dismissal of a reporter or a triennial retraction which would cause the murmurs of discontented thousands to pass unheeded"—such ironical shafts may perhaps be ignored in the newspaper world as coming from academic sources, but not the complaints and the admissions of journalists themselves. At least, continued disregard of this source of irritation cannot

but be expensive to the newspaper press as a whole—expensive in prestige and influence, which means, ultimately, expensive in every way.

"A man who accidentally pushes you off the sidewalk into a muddy gutter will at least beg your pardon," declares a long-time student of newspapers, Fred Newton Scott, of the University of Michigan. "If he does not he is no gentleman, but either a boor or a cad. But the newspaper which has pushed you into the gutter, rolled you in filth, even given you a kick or two in the ribs, will not only refrain from apologizing for its rudeness, but, if it pays any further attention to you at all, will usually jeer at you and make you the butt of the spectators, thus adding injury to insult. I do not know of any newspaper in this country which freely, promptly and ungrudgingly apologizes for its mistake and gives to the apology the same space and prominence which it gave to the injurious article. Therefore I do not hesitate to say that every newspaper that I am accustomed to read is to this extent either a boor or a cad. They may all be admirable newspapers in other respects but in this respect they are simply contemptible."

Another testimonial in the same vein has been given by Robert Lansing, former secretary of state:

To admit an error of statement, a false deduction or a wrong judgment is something that an editor cannot do, as that would be a confession that he was not the pure fountain of truth from which the people may unhesitatingly draw their information and upon which they may base their opinions.

Why the Discrepancy?

It is apparent that two widely divergent views are presented by these expressions of opinion. The professions of newspaper executives as to fair play and corrections seem not to agree with their practice, as that practice is judged by the public, including some who are on the inside of journalism.

There is no doubt that the professions made by editors are sincerely made in most cases. Few newspapers hold to the theory that they are so powerful as to be able to ignore injustice done by them to individuals or, at least, to follow a consistent policy of disregard for individual rights. Few newspapers are indifferent to the moral aspect of the matter

and still fewer are so injudicious as to invite a reputation for high-handedness and brutality. Only a few journalistic buccaneers frankly revel in the "glad freedom of irresponsible power." But it is obvious that in carrying out their professed policies of fairness some newspapers fail to attain the level of practice which the public expects; and, in this case, the public seems to have the best of the argument.

This failure in the matter of realizing ideals as to making corrections is partly due to the fact that most of us are too busy trying to avoid to-day's opportunities for mistakes to take much interest in correcting the errors we made yesterday. Then too, human beings just naturally do not like to correct errors—that is, their own. For the grown-up, hardly less than for the child, admission of error and apology for a mistake is a harrowing experience because it involves a sacrifice of pride which is humiliating. The evolutionary process will doubtless produce a being who gets supreme satisfaction out of acknowledging his own blunders—an editor who enjoys printing corrections—but the logical next step in the process is the being who seeks a maximum of happiness through the simple expedient of making as many errors as possible in order to have the satisfaction of correcting them.

If, in the case of the newspaper, admission of error is less personal—less humiliating to any individual—since it is a correction of an institutional rather than an individual mistake, yet the dread of diminished authority is keenly felt by all concerned. "We are entitled to have some thought for our own prestige," is the way one editor puts it. Or as another argues, "Doctors are not forever admitting that they have made errors in diagnosis or prescription. Lawyers are not given to telling the jury that the insinuations made by them the day before were not justified by the facts. Why should the editor be expected to deplete his stock of self esteem and his assets of prestige by advertising his blunders? The only person who enjoys admitting an error is the curious individual who does it for effect when the stage setting is favorable—a practitioner of humility who makes boasting of error his pose."

But is there not here shown a disregard for the loss of

prestige resulting from a too conservative policy as to corrections?

Possibly it is true that, measured by an abstract moral standard—if such exists—a newspaper's errors are no worse than an individual's; but inasmuch as they have more serious practical consequences they are a matter of greater social concern.

Another thing which beclouds the issue in the mind of the editor is the paradox that the public both wants and does not want corrections printed in the paper. It condemns failure to print them, but does not care to read them when printed. Regret it as much as we may, the public has convinced many editors that "whatever reflects discredit on a fellow being is news, and whatever tends to remove that discredit is not news." Nevertheless the public feels that an editor who uses the public's own shortcomings in good taste as his alibi is a rather pitiful figure. And he is. A newspaper should be captain of its own soul.

What Is "Adequate" Correction?

Dissatisfaction with the practical working out of the editor's profession of fairness originates also in a lack of agreement between the editor and the public as to what constitutes an adequate correction. The conventional demand of the public is, (1) that the correction be run in the same position in which the error was printed, and (2) that it be given a heading of equal size.

The varying attitudes of representative editors toward these demands is shown by the following quotations from letters dealing with the subject:

1. It is too difficult, for reasons of make-up, to print a correction in the same position as that in which the error appeared.

2. No matter in what section of the paper the original error occurred, we carry the correction on page one in the belief that in doing so we are doing our utmost to right an injustice.

3. Usually the correction is given the same position and prominence as the article containing the error.

4. We try, although it is not always possible, to give the correction as much prominence as the original story. That much, too, is due the reader.

5. It would be folly to put a large head on a simple correction in the same position.

6. Oftentimes the correction is given much more prominence than the original article, depending on how serious the error may be. We handle each correction on its own individual merits.

7. When the error is one of unimportance and the correction is sought more for the purpose of mortifying the newspaper than setting right the readers, a paper is justified in minimizing the space given to the correction.

8. The position which is given such an announcement in the newspaper does not mean anything, but we take great pains when making a correction to see that the other fellow gets the best of it by displaying it as he or she may like.

9. If a serious injustice has been done to any person we make the correction at least as prominent and usually more prominent than the offending items, both as to position and headlines.

Although these answers present considerable variety, they reveal a general policy which would seem to meet the requirements of the public. The editor is, and ought to be, the final arbiter, except in cases involving libelous statements leading to court proceedings—cases with which we have no concern in a discussion interested solely in maladjustments not subject to legal remedies.

Apparently the solution of the whole problem lies in a general adoption by editors of the attitude and the practice of those exponents of the true professional ideals of journalism, those editors most liberal in their interpretations of the newspaper's responsibility for fairness towards individuals and dependability in the eyes of the general public—its adoption both in theory and in practice.

Degree of Error

Probably no one would deny that there is a class of mistakes creeping into the news columns too trivial to admit of correction. In this class are ordinary typographical errors, misplacement of parts of stories, mixing of cuts. Yet such errors, while having no measurable consequences, are nevertheless as busy as rats in a ship's hold gnawing at the newspaper's prestige in the minds of its more exacting readers. In this class are all such errors as would be unduly magnified by correction

and cases in which correction would only add to the embarrassment of the individual concerned.

Slightly more serious are the instances in which protest is made to the newspaper regarding a statement which the editor finds on investigation to be substantially correct. The most that can be expected of the editor in such case is that he give the reader space in which to present his views, and give it to him freely without attempting to put him in the wrong or punish him with ridicule.

"Our rule is that letters complaining of misstatements shall be printed in the department of 'Letters to the Editor,'" is a report that presents the prevailing policy. "All letters to the editor, correcting our mistakes, if they are not too trivial, impertinent or silly, we take pains to print," is a rule that leaves room for a proper exercise of the editor's discretion and is liberal enough if the editor himself is liberal enough.

Next in the order of importance are errors which call for a restatement of the facts in a later issue of the paper. Probably no individual has been aggrieved by the original statement but inaccuracies were included in it. A corrected statement or an entirely new article containing the verified facts meets the requirements of the case.

Fourth in point of seriousness is the error which calls for an out-and-out correction, without attempt to pass the blame to a news source or to the speed jinx. The remedial statement either carries the heading, "A Correction," or "This Paper was Wrong," or an equivalent heading, or at least states frankly in the heading or in the lead to the story that an error was made in a previous article. In handling cases of this sort the editor soon demonstrates to his readers the breadth of his mind, the acuteness of his sense of justice, and the texture of his courage—for it takes courage to admit error. Incidentally he makes evident to his own staff the standards of accuracy which he requires of them.

The fifth order of errors, and the most serious, is the one calling not merely for correction but for apology. Here again the real fibre of the editor's soul is put to the test. Fortunately such tests are not often presented in any well regulated

newspaper office, large or small, and it is a fine tribute to journalism that such is the case.

The means by which each case will be evaluated and its proper handling determined, will of course vary radically. In some offices the editor who happens to be least busy at the time will take care of it. In other offices, this haphazard procedure gives way to some sort of bureau of accuracy and fair play. Under any system, the machinery is of far less importance than the spirit in which the thing is done.

And why should not fairness of spirit and liberality of policy be advertised? They are excellent goods and the demand for them is great. Such advertising of a desire to correct errors will bring "business." Too much business? Well, perhaps, for the editor who is blind to the larger values. No doubt the whole thing is bothersome. So is the store policy of exchanging or accepting return of goods. But it is a good store policy. "The customer is always right," has won general adoption as a business slogan. Why should not the profession of journalism approximate the level of the trade of merchandising?

Use of a Standing Head

An interesting method of making formal corrections, and one which seems to be gaining in favor among editors, is that of the standing head, sometimes boxed, "Beg Your Pardon," or, "Truth is Found also in the Correction of Error," or some similar expression. One advantage of such a department is that errors trivial and yet irritating may be corrected in it without unduly magnifying their importance. Editors who are not yet friendly to this plan usually object to it on the ground that it "would give the impression that we have a great number of corrections to make," or that it appears "more or less wooden and insincere," or that it "affords no opportunity for discriminating between the more important and the less important corrections," or that "it does not have a good psychological effect upon the public."

The use of the standing head does not, of course, prevent giving greater prominence to any correction which, in the

opinion of the editor, requires it. As to the psychological effects upon the public, the argument seems to be strongly in favor of the standing head. The number of errors in newspapers, like most other things which it has been the policy to cover up, is greatly magnified by the public. The standing head, if it occasions any surprise, will do so by reason of the smallness of the amount of matter that appears under it from day to day rather than by the largeness of the amount. "It gives the impression to the public of good faith and shows that the paper is trying at least to be accurate," is the testimony of one important newspaper executive who has used it for several years. "We have no evidence that it lessens the paper's prestige; we do not find so far as we can observe that it invites frivolous demands for corrections." Surely nothing is to be lost by abandoning the absurd pose of infallibility.

On the whole this device of the standing head seems to merit a fair trial by newspapers everywhere. The fact that "it often irritates the reporters or sub-editors who find in it a certain implication of criticism," does not seem likely to militate against the accuracy of the newspaper or its standing in its community.

However notable have been the comparatively recent improvements in the business and editorial departments of newspapers—the organized efforts for more efficient production, supplying the public with a better commodity—even more significant is the progress made in the last few years towards a more general adherence to high journalistic standards and a wider acceptance of professional ideals. Serious minds in journalism everywhere are bent upon the problem of the newspaper's influence. There is no news to them in the statement that something is wrong between journalism and its public. But it is in really big news that editors and publishers are seriously trying to find out what is the matter and what can be done about it. Any question involving human beings in the mass is likely to prove difficult, mixed, elusive. The good will, confidence, and responsiveness of the public are mysterious and baffling phenomena to the student of public opinion as well as to the casual observer. Only painstaking analysis of each factor in

the problem promises practical results. The policy in handling corrections is one such factor.

Fairness Not Easy to Maintain

The foregoing are some of the forms in which the problem of fairness presents itself to the editor.

Difficult? Yes; but not too difficult. An admirer of one great American newspaper has said:

It is a fine thing, and, as all practical men know, a difficult thing, to maintain over the years a policy of fair play, of hearing both sides in the news columns. Regardless of what the *Times* has favored in its editorial columns, it has always printed the news, and a finer thing could be said of no paper.

CHAPTER VII

HANDLING THE NEWS OF ANTISOCIAL ACTS

Whatever may be the limits to the propriety of the study of man by mankind, there are no limits to its interest.

Everybody likes to watch animals at play, animals on the hunt, even animals in a fight that is not too brutal, and the animals which interest us most are those of our own kind. In this realm direct observation has the maximum of reality, but its interest is hardly greater than that of indirect observation afforded by literature and the other arts.

Few would question that this phase of the social instinct is good for us; that it has been a potent force in helping to bring us thus far up the road of progress; that the best evidence of its bearing our approval is that we describe it as "socializing."

Limitations Are Needed

But the experience of the race has brought it to believe that many beneficial instincts require limitation, and the limitations established constitute an important part of what it calls civilization. Our instinctive curiosity about our fellows has been found to be of this sort. It has been found desirable to hedge it about by restrictions which attempt to guarantee that we shall, on the one hand, be allowed to attend to our own business at least a part of the time, and on the other hand, keep out of other people's business all of the time.

To find where the line should be drawn has been a difficult matter; is still about as difficult as anything in life. Indeed, the location of the line is constantly changing; the hand of public opinion rubs it out here and draws it there to-day, only to erase it again to-morrow and draw it elsewhere. It is not a straight line, nor a fixed line, nor a clear line some-

times, and around it is much confusion and debate and what we call the complexity of life.

And so, the question as to how much it is good for us to know about the rest of the world has for one of its phases the question as to how much it is well for the newspaper to tell us about our fellows. How much, for example, should it print of what may be called disagreeable news, or news of antisocial activities, or as some people describe it, news of a negative type, or crimson news, or simply, news of crime and scandal?

Not a Question of Reporting All That Happens

The expression attributed to a great American editor, to the effect that whatever Providence allowed to happen would be reported in his paper, was a brilliant epigram, but it would be a treacherous guide. Its philosophy may be defended, of course; in fact it may be argued interminably because it involves the paradox of the existence of evil under a Beneficence that is omnipotent. But as a practical matter the rule has never received full sanction by any considerable proportion of either journalists or readers of newspapers. And it has never received even approximate exemplification, though the yellow press went far in that direction. Everywhere in life we find the principle established that there is a point at which reticence must rule. Never was there a realist so thoroughgoing as to abandon all restraint in his expression of his art. It is not humanly possible to tell the whole truth, and even if it were possible, nobody would sanction the telling.

Poor Excuses for a Radical Policy

The newspaper editor who maintains that it is his business to print detailed accounts of the commission, trial, and punishment of crime uses one or all of the following arguments in support of his policy: (1) that such news is commercially profitable; (2) that the public has a right to receive what it wants; (3) that the newspaper's responsibility ends when it has accurately recorded the facts and that its province does not extend to a selection or coloring of facts in order to teach

a lesson. In practice he does not go to the extreme of printing all the facts, as has been pointed out. He omits the most revolting details and the most offensive language, but he approaches the extreme as closely as public opinion or the law will tolerate.

1. The refutation of the first argument need not be undertaken here. It will be made sufficiently plain in the later discussion of the function of the press. A journalism in which commercialism is the dominating force is not rightly to be called journalism but a dangerous imitation of journalism by men who belong in purely commercial pursuits, and might be useful to society in business, but are ill fitted to render professional services to their communities.

2. The weakness of the second argument has been considered in the chapter on independence.

Supplementing what was there said, we may note one typical case of a newspaper attempting to defend its sensationalism in the following words:

The vast majority of perfectly wholesome and normally intelligent men and women are a great deal more interested in the flesh-and-blood doings, springing from flesh-and-blood motives of flesh-and-blood human beings than they are in theories of economics, problems of governments, perplexities of diplomacy, or complexities of banking and currency.

No sane man doubts that the latter class of questions is of infinitely greater importance than the former class of stories. And yet, the fact remains that out of one thousand people nine hundred and ninety-nine are infinitely more interested in the woman who tried to kill the other woman than they are in the rival merits of currency measures. And as long as the vast majority of perfectly worthy people prefer to read about the dramatic, the mysterious, the romantic, the comic, the tragic in human affairs, rather than the important, the *World* is not in the least ashamed of giving them what they want to read as fully and as prominently as it gives them what they ought to read. The *World* tries to balance the two types of news, avoiding an appeal to morbidity on the one hand and an appeal to intellectual priggishness on the other.

It is a weak case, based on cowardice and social irresponsibility. One critic draws this comparison:

If half a dozen milk bottles left on the back steps of as many houses in this city this morning had contained poison milk, a great cry would go up and the criminals would be brought to swift justice. But if the poison of hate, prejudice, suspicion and crime is delivered in the shape of a newspaper at thousands of front doors, shall we say nothing because the poison works slower though just as surely and affects the mind and soul instead of merely the body?

An editorial writer in the *Saturday Evening Post* sums up the issue thus:

Sentimentalize, psychoanalyze, Fletcherize. Play up the unpleasant in streaming headlines. Gangway for the ghastly. Squeeze the teardrops into every column—that is the conception of the part the press should play in the administration of justice that too many of our newspapers hold. . . . But the newspapers of America should realize that a great gulf lies between what the reading public will devour and what the reading public should have.

Speaking before the National Editorial Association, Crosby S. Noyes once painted the picture in such terms as these:

Take a copy of a modern Penny Dreadful. You will find it packed with Horrors, many of them so precious in sensational atrocity as to require, for each, five sets of job-type headlines—the special Thriller of the day, with pictures and biographies of the Woman in the Case; pictures and biographies of the Villain who pursued the Woman in the Case; pictures and biographies of the more or less crazy husband who killed the pursuing Villain; pictures and biographies of all the relatives, friends and acquaintances of the pursued woman, the pursuing Villain, and the killing Avenger; pictures and biographies of the judge, the jury, and the lawyers in the case; pictures and biographies of the scores of alienists who deposed variously that the avenging husband was crazy when he killed the pursuing Villain and sane the moment after; or that he was born crazy, is crazy now, and will be crazy all his life. The paper will be spaced out with minor horrors of considerable sensational value. There will be reports of Black-Hand assassinations, rapes, elopements, divorces, massacres of Jews in Russia, Christians in Turkey; gruesome stories of starvation and corpse-eating cannibalism in China, and manifold horrors and atrocities reported by cable, telephone, wire and wireless telegraphy. No quarter of the globe will have escaped the searchlight of the enterprising journal in quest of malodorous, putrid happenings.

So it seems that the primitive in man makes many demands which the rational man does not sanction.

3. The third bit of rationalization has an engaging plausibility. It attempts to invoke the scientific ideal of respect for the facts as we find them. It suggests the admirable maxim, "Hew to the line; let the chips fall where they may." The fallacy in it is the acceptance of fact as being synonymous with truth. This distinction has often been pointed out by journalists with keener analytical powers than are manifested by those who use the third argument. The facts about a crime or about a criminal may, and usually do, fail lamentably to present the truth. The facts are likely to be negative or destructive in their effects on others; the truth not so.

Truth Back of Facts

By way of illustration consider a paragraph from an account of a legal execution printed in a city newspaper; and not unlike statements often found in descriptions of trials and executions:

When the death warrant was read Lockett stood unmoved and yawned at the finish. His only comment was: "I am ready to go. I am not afraid to die."

The facts are there, but the truth is not there. The item as it stands is antisocial. Why? Because all our lives we have been taught admiration of fearlessness in the face of death. It is a part of our concept of the heroic. It is to our minds the final and the supreme evidence of greatness of soul. As we grow older we may modify our views on the matter; but by that time let us hope we shall have ceased to devour the crime stories in the newspapers.

The paragraph quoted makes a hero of a criminal—in the minds, it is safe to say, of the great majority of readers. But the criminal was not in truth a hero. There was nothing heroic about him. He was a very ordinary murderer. That was the truth about him. The newspaper told the facts but it left the perception of the truth to the discernment of the reader. But readers of newspapers are not, at the time, in a

mood of discernment. Some of them are not capable of it. Some are too inexperienced to supply the necessary background. They got the glamour of the facts in the paragraph quoted; they did not get the tragedy of the truth. If their minds made any passing observation, it was not, "What a failure of a life; what a waste; what a wreck!" but more likely, "That fellow had courage. Some pretty good men commit crimes. Seems too bad he had to die!" It is true that some pretty good men commit crimes, but the perception of that fact alone, without all its modifying implications, is not constructive in its influence on any individual nor on society.

Literature—great literature—has given us the truth about such criminals. The paragraph quoted might appear, word for word, in a great novel or short story and yet give every reader an overpowering sense of the true values in life, because the Turgenev who told the man's story gave us the background and revealed the inner tragedy—told us the truth about the man.

The truth will not hurt us but the facts are sometimes deadly.

And, in the nature of things, the newspaper can not give us the truth, except in those rare instances in which great literature comes ready made from the mind of an inspired reporter. A Turgenev would need days and maybe months, and a wealth of experience, and an endowment of genius, to tell us the truth about that criminal.

Knowledge of good and evil is doubtless a prerequisite of moral conduct, but it is necessary not to lose sight of the fact that evil is sometimes presented in the guise of good, or takes on that aspect for at least some of its beholders.

The newspaper, then, which publishes the day's record of crime and social catastrophe will need to use extraordinary care to meet its responsibilities as a social organ.

Not a Question of Reporting Nothing Unpleasant

To dispose of the extremes brings the inquirer to the median belt in which the real merit of a question is usually discovered. It seems clear that the debatable ground as to printing news of antisocial acts lies some distance to the right of the position described in the last section. How far it extends towards

the conservative extreme is a matter of debate. That it goes the whole distance seems to be contrary to the judgment of the practical wisdom of the time; and this pragmatic test we must apply if we would arrive at anything more than a beautiful theory.

If a benevolent despot ruled an American city, would he sanction newspapers of some sort? It is hardly to be questioned. To be sure we have a habit of thinking that the world improved a good deal before the days of any newspapers. And yet, the historical study of the functions of the press can hardly fail to convince any one that the newspaper has developed because it satisfied fundamental needs of human beings, among them the need for greater justice and freedom. It is incredible that our benevolent despot would refuse to use such an agency as the press, at its best.

But would he be wise in keeping from the inhabitants all knowledge of the evil or destructive or negative portion of the day's happenings? If he did so would the result be that, lacking the stimulus of suggestion, all the evil propensities of the people would atrophy, leaving the good despot, or at least his successor, in charge of a community of angels? Disregarding, for the sake of argument, the joyful influx that might be expected from the great underworld, or, in other words, assuming benevolent despots for all cities and one for the rural stretches between, are we to believe, then, that the city, day by day, would grow better and better upon a diet of pleasant information only? Hardly!

But imagine that the despot had the bad luck to become malevolent. Surely he would lose no time in establishing a yellow journalism! Through it he would advertise crime and vice. The romance and heroism, the thrills and pleasures of the criminal's life would be suggested. The successful methods used in crime would be described. Does any one doubt that the results would be almost as destructive socially as though crime were taught in the schools? Such is the reasonable conclusion; but it is equally clear that the amount of damage that can be done by an evil press is no greater than the amount of good that can be accomplished by a press that

lives up to its responsibilities. And "living up to its responsibilities" need not be conceived to mean refusing utterly to see and to report things as they exist in our imperfect world. As Herbert Bayard Swope has said:

Journalism is life reflected in ink, and it must partake of the ugliness as well as the beauty of life. It need only keep the basic honesty of life; then, it will never have cause to feel ashamed of itself.

The question does not simmer down to one of profits. Possibly a policy of printing nothing unpleasant would pay financially. If we glance for a moment at the magazines, we shall find that those of greatest circulations are not the ones which tell the truth about life—not the unpleasant truth. They shun it. Their fiction is of the pleasant-ending-at-any-cost sort. Their articles deal with success, usually measured in money. This is doubtless in reaction from the muck-raking popular some years ago.

The same reaction is making its appearance here and there in journalism. Very possibly the swing in the new direction might go farther than it ought for the public good. Just now it does not seem that a wholly "pleasant" newspaper is what society needs. Society needs more truth than that. In fact it needs all the facts that can be printed without destructive effects. How much that may be is a question on which opinions differ. But the publisher, editor, or reporter who refuses to make it a subject of careful study falls that much short of meeting his professional responsibilities. His standards are in danger of becoming inferior even to those of commerce, where the quality and serviceableness of the commodities produced and distributed are scrutinized unremittingly.

The Editor's Real Problem

The practical problem facing the editor is both quantitative and qualitative, but chiefly the latter. How much news of crime and vice will his paper print is part of it; but also, and chiefly, in what way can he present crime and vice so that the effect will be constructive? Both of these questions are difficult enough and the second especially so.

The question of quantity involves the question as to the news value of crime, or as to how keenly the public wants such news; and back of that the question of why the public wants it and whether it is consistent with the best standard of editorial responsibility to give the public what it wants.

The news values of a story of crime may depend upon its nearness to the reader in time and space, the reader's acquaintance with the persons concerned, the prominence of the participants, the dramatic features of the affair, unique features, mystery, relations to other crimes, and many other considerations. But news value is only one of the things to be determined. The other questions will be considered in this chapter. They relate to such matters as the wisdom of giving details of crime, recognition and avoidance of the dramatic appeal, brutalizing descriptions, palliative effects to be avoided, constructive work in promoting social order, warnings to the public, and like topics.

Scientific Basis of the Matter

The fears that were loudly proclaimed some years ago that hypnotic suggestion would play a sinister part in the world—fears that were exploited in both fiction and drama—seem not to have been realized. But the study of suggestion in general has thrown great light upon the genesis of human conduct both social and antisocial. It has, for one thing, given rise to much serious discussion of the kinds of stimuli proceeding from a description of a crime when read by various types of individuals.

The newspaper crime story has been studied by the psychologist as, "the source of initial images of ideas that may constitute either a part of the fringe of a present act or the focus of a present act, leading a person to decide to commit a crime and giving him the method." For one who cares to pursue the subject as treated scientifically, discussions of suggestion are available in any recent book on general psychology, as well as a few special studies of antisocial tendencies as affected by news of crime and vice and domestic tragedy.

For our present purpose it seems permissible to take the

scientific basis for granted. Its validity is not questioned by any scientist. Nor does it need to be accepted on faith, merely, by people in general, for every mature person is aware of the power of suggestion. Realization of its potency increases with systematic observation and experience, but sufficient foundation for the purposes of the present discussion is a matter of common knowledge.

The adult whose own daily experience teaches him the power of suggestion does not need a scientist to tell him of the vastly greater potency of this influence upon adolescents. He knows how impressionable they are, how easily their newly formed concepts of right and wrong may be distorted. In their minds are being cut the channels through which will flow the thoughts and impulses of maturity. Everybody agrees that the reading of bad fiction at this age is demoralizing. How much worse the reading of bad fact!

Suggestibility is as fundamental in our natures as any part of them, though not all people are equally suggestible any more than they are equally sympathetic, or playful, or fearful, or acquisitive, or sociable, or curious. Also it is a commonplace that the imitative instinct, like the others, functions less vigorously as we grow older. After we have taken the children to the circus, we enjoy watching them re-enact the events, even though we are a little sorry for the cat that is a highly unwilling tiger in respect to jumping through hoops. But we do not—unhappily for us, perhaps—enter the ring, unless a whip cracker needs attention or the knot of a lasso fails to slip properly. We have acquired detachment. We look at things objectively. Or we have developed certain inhibitions. Such expressions and others describe the fact of our change.

Nevertheless, we are all more or less suggestible to the end of our lives, and if we examine our acts from day to day we shall be surprised to find how many of them can be traced to origins in close proximity, at least, to the instinct for imitation. Our conduct is what we are, and what we are is largely the sum of what we have thought.

Then, the criminologists tell us of the people found in all walks of life who have attained years but not maturity and

who require the same protection from temptation and from negative stimuli as does youth.

Also, we are told of the occasional criminal or the potential criminal who requires only a slight external influence to upset the equilibrium of his conduct, lacking a sufficient inner repugnance towards unethical behaviour.

"Mob psychology" is another subject engaging the attention of scientists and others. "The crowd itself is irrational," is one way of stating the general conclusion, "it cannot dissect, weigh, and compare; cannot apply remembered teachings." People in the mass sometimes lose all resemblance to the same people as individuals. And while the phrase, "people in the mass," pictures them in physical assembly, the ideas given simultaneously to a community by a newspaper have sometimes produced the same kind of concerted reaction as that which is thought of only as the objective of the orator. A book on group or mass psychology is really a text book in journalism.

Lessons in Crime

This phrase used sometimes by critics of the press refers partly to actual instruction in the "technique" of crime given unwittingly by newspapers that print detailed accounts of clever methods used in specific instances, and partly to the less direct "lessons" embodied in suggestions which may be unconsciously admitted to the mind of the reader and acted upon a month or a year or ten years subsequently when a combination of circumstances exists favorable to a line of action. The former is comparatively rare. Even beginners in crime do not need to depend on the newspapers for instruction, since they can get it from far more competent sources. The latter is more common, and an understanding of the psychology of suggestion constitutes one of the greatest needs in the education of journalists.

A case or two will suffice as examples of the first kind of "lesson."

CASE.—A newspaper printed a lengthy article on the methods by which automobile thieves pick out the cars to be stolen,

disguise them to prevent identification, secure registration in other states, and dispose of them through "agencies."

Comment.—The article was intensely interesting, but it offered no protection to the owners of automobiles because no preventive measures were suggested, beyond that of being sure that the car is locked. It was of no value to officers because they already understood the methods used by automobile thieves. Its effect on the reader was to impress him with the ease and safety attending such thefts. It is inconceivable that among the thousands of readers of that article there were not some, already predisposed to cross the borderline of crime, who hesitated no longer.

Similarly, a newspaper printed an article on the various clever ways in which banks are defrauded or robbed. It was hardly constructive. A concern manufacturing a device to prevent the "raising" of checks was much more judicious. It issued a pamphlet showing by means of fac-simile reproductions of raised checks how easily such fraud could be perpetrated when a check was carelessly written, thus proving the need of the device recommended; but the company took scrupulous care that the pamphlet was seen only by responsible business executives.

A succession of axe murders was at one time pointed to as an example of a fashion in crime established by the publicity given to the first deed of the sort. So with a unique method of gaining entrance to houses for the purpose of committing burglary. So with stories of "Tom, the Peeper," and of peculiar methods of arson. A murder in a dance hall in Chicago was followed by others committed in a similar manner and given the name "tango murders." After a story of an abduction in which a hypodermic needle played a part had been printed sensationally, there followed a succession of "poison needle" abductions in widely separated localities. In one city an epidemic of "boy bandit" holdups followed a graphic write-up of the first instance of the kind.

In how many cases the series of similar crimes was committed by the same person, in how many cases they were mere coincidences, or in how many they were faked by unscrupulous

reporters is impossible to determine. But the considerable smoke indicates fire, and the logic of the matter points in the same direction. In matters that contradict reason or experience, we may well demand overwhelming proof in the form of concrete evidence. In the present instance the conclusion arrived at is supported both by reason and experience and by such concrete facts as are available. That more evidence has not been assembled seems due to the difficulty of penetrating the dark alleys of human conduct and to the fact that it has been nobody's business to undertake the task. The journalist who takes the defensive position that he is "waiting to be shown" is in a sadly untenable position and one unworthy of a profession supposed to exercise initiative where truth is concerned.

Serious Effects from Trivial Causes

The incongruity between a trifling provocation and a tragic consequence constitutes a kind of news value. That the prevailing effect of such news is likely to be beneficial is not always clear.

CASE.—A rooster's crowing annoyed a man living across the alley. He complained to the owner of the fowl but without avail. Then he went to the hen house before daybreak and wrung the rooster's neck. The owner heard the noise and shot out of the window, killing the intruder.

Comment.—The hen has an amazing court record, in some cases leading to the Supreme Court of the United States. She and her kind have been at the bottom of as much violence as the line fence. It seems that the effect of reading about such absurdities should be to increase sanity and a decent regard for the feelings and rights of the neighbors, but the element of doubt is present.

Do Newspapers Breed Criminals?

After a discussion of a subject like the present, from a scientific or theoretical standpoint, the person of practical mind very properly asks: "But what evidence have you from the criminals themselves? How many of them trace their evil doing to the influence of something read in a newspaper?"

For the answer to this question it is necessary to go to the criminal himself, either directly or through the information obtained by police officers, court officials, or wardens of penitentiaries.

The criminal himself has afforded very little dependable evidence in response to direct questioning. And for very good reasons. He is not usually capable of introspection. He has no interest in endeavoring to trace effects back to their primary causes, least of all, effects in his own conduct. His answers to questions by an investigator are anything but trustworthy.

Inquiries made of police officials have brought statements that some criminals ascribe their wrong doing to suggestions received from newspaper stories. Strong unanimity of opinion is found that such effects must necessarily follow the publication of crime news as now practised by most newspapers. One chief of police in a city of medium size states: "I have known of only one case in which a criminal laid the blame for his act on newspapers." But he adds, "I believe that crime news as now handled has a tendency to encourage other acts of the same type and I believe it would be better if only the main facts of a crime were published, as the details give the potential criminal a line of action to follow."

Prosecuting attorneys hold similar views. One attorney with a wealth of experience in a rather large city, both as prosecutor and as judge, says:

There is no doubt in my mind that the newspapers, by their method of treatment of crimes as news stories, do unwittingly incite and encourage crime among the youthful, the weak-minded, and the quasi-criminal classes. They lead this class to believe that the commission of crime is easy and is attended with more or less safety. If less space were given to the commission of crime and more to trials resulting in conviction of criminals, a much better result would be gained for the entire public.

This experienced prosecutor also expressed the opinion that:

The newspapers in their haste to publish all the details relative to a crime often apprise the criminal of the evidence against him and render him much harder to apprehend.

Criminals have sometimes admitted that they read the papers for possible clues as to the best means of avoiding capture. The amount of help obtained in this way is, however, small because the report is some hours behind the action taken by the police, or it concerns only such action as is merely a matter of routine, or it is deliberately framed to deceive the fugitive.

From wardens of penitentiaries opinions are fairly consistent that much of the crime news is demoralizing. These opinions often lack the backing of specific evidence which might be expected from that source, and which it is to be hoped will, ere long, be sought and presented to the public. One warden reports that no daily papers are given to inmates of the prisons or reformatories in his state. Another, that the reading of prisoners is confined to copies of papers free from sensational crime stories.

In a recent annual report of a police commissioner of New York is the following statement:

During the year the local press of New York took occasion to publish, almost daily, scare-headlines and exaggerated stories of crime and lawlessness in this city, which served only to advertise the business of the criminal and to attract criminals from far and near, who because of the newspaper stories, believed they could operate here with impunity.

Many young men, without previous criminal records, stated, under oath, upon examination at police headquarters, that they were induced to commit crime because the newspapers had led them to believe that they could do so in this city with little or no fear of arrest and the consequences.

The Glamour of the Romantic

No one doubts the evil influence of bad books upon impressionable youth. Few doubt that the crime film bears fruit in lawlessness. Society has taken measures to protect itself from both of these destructive agencies. It is not necessary to examine in detail the scientific basis for our belief that admiration of a hero begets imitation of a hero. Full advantage of the principle, on its constructive side, is embraced in our educational methods from the kindergarten up. Examples of it have come within the observation of all of us.

Few journalists, however much they practice sensationalism, will seriously defend the news story that tends to make a hero of a criminal or to surround a crime with an atmosphere of romance. But many newspapers do just this thing day after day, rationalizing the procedure by such excuses as, "the other fellow is doing it," or, "it is what the public wants," or "children don't read the newspapers anyhow." Then, too, there is a very real practical difficulty of knowing just where to draw the line; and in case of doubt the decision is likely to be in favor of the "good story."

CASE.—A bandit attempted to rob a mail car but was overpowered by the mail clerk and delivered to the officers. He had a long criminal record, including several escapes from officers and from prisons. The press association's story of the capture filled almost two columns. In most papers it was given prominent position on the front page.

In the "lead" the bandit was described as, "the most elusive criminal, probably, the country has ever known," and the doubt was expressed that he would "stay put" very long. The engaging personal qualities of the man were presented in a conversation he had at the prison with his captor:

The prisoner held out his hand and said, "You haven't got any hard feelings, have you?"

"I've got a wife and child at home," replied the mail clerk.

"So have I," responded the man, "and if you had had a gun last night your wife would have been a widow to-day. I never hurt an unarmed man. But next time a gun is stuck against you, put up your hands. It might not be me behind the gun."

Then followed a thrilling account of the criminal's several successful breaks for liberty. His bravery, his affection for his wife, and his sense of humor were all brought out.

Comment.—The story was essentially false and as damaging from a social standpoint as any "yellow back." The statements of fact were correct, no doubt, but the truth about the bandit was all between the lines. Mature readers would appreciate it but the immature would not; and no journalist seriously asserts that his paper is not read by a high per cent of the immature, regardless of age.

CASE.—A young woman wearing a black mask held jail guards at bay with a pistol while her sweetheart escaped. The dramatic features of the occurrence were vividly brought out: the slight and refined appearance of the girl, her coolness in a hazardous undertaking, her loyalty to the man in jail.

Comment.—It would be impossible to estimate with any certainty how large a percentage of the readers of this story felt the romantic appeal in it and were secretly grieved to read later of the capture of the girl and her lover. But there can be no doubt of a demoralizing influence from such dramatizations.

CASE.—A young divorcée was arrested on the charge of having murdered a man supposed to have been one of her suitors. Her former husband, who was a lawyer, rushed half-way across the continent to take up her defence declaring that he had never ceased to love her. The dramatic features of the situation were played up in practically all newspapers. The woman's brave "fight for life" with the help of her "chivalric champion" was presented day after day until it became a national topic of conversation.

Comment.—Few indeed were those capable of seeing the different elements of the case in proper perspective, of maintaining right values, of remembering the dead man and the cause of justice and safety.

CASE.—Torti the Weasel lies abed in St. Vincent's Hospital. Paralysis is creeping over him. Even if he lives he will be sent back to Mulberry Street a helpless cripple. His career as a gunman is over and done with. He is disgraced in the eyes of the slinking, rat-eyed youths who haunt Chatham Square, Chinatown, and the old Five Points quarter. He never can face them again.

Armed and in full strength he let a policeman smaller than himself take his pistol away from him yesterday morning. When he tried to run, the policeman fired a bullet into the small of his back. It was an inglorious, humiliating anticlimax to a violent record. This Torti had dared the vengeance of Big Jack Zelig when Zelig was in the full flush of gangster power. He was one of the few who ever summoned the nerve to draw a gun on Zelig and pull the trigger. Yet a policeman, a little policeman, bent him backward over a fence yesterday morning, took his gun away from him and shot him with his own weapon.

Charley Kane, jiu jitsu and bag punching expert of the police

department, 145 pounds of whalebone and nerve, was walking in Mulberry Street early yesterday morning with his pal, Detective Brennan. They were not advertising for the police department. Night birds who knew them not would have taken them for derelicts of the quarter—homeless men on the prowl. They were dressed shabbily, sweaters and battered caps adding the correct atmosphere. Detectives resort to disguises outside detective stories. (followed by details of the capture)

Comment.—The foregoing quotation from a metropolitan newspaper serves as an example of the dramatic crime story in which the policeman is the hero. Also, the rewards of a life of crime are truthfully suggested. In the main the story may be called constructive, though the significant news contained in it hardly seems to warrant the half-column space devoted to it. It is, at least, far better in character than a story printed about the same time and headed: "Sonny Dunn, the Desperado with a Charmed Life. Prison Bars Can't Hold Him and Chicago Cops Can't Catch Him."

CASE.—An underworld character suspected of a crime was arrested but escaped and took refuge in a deserted building. He had obtained weapons, and when his whereabouts was discovered he defended himself. The house was surrounded by officers and an almost continuous firing was kept up by them during the afternoon and night. The fugitive returned the fire intermittently. Finally the building was set afire and the escaped prisoner was shot when he appeared at a window. Most city newspapers carried sensational accounts of the "battle." It was the main feature in the successive editions of that day.

Comment.—A human instinct, no less admirable than universal, is sympathy for the under dog, for the fellow who makes a brave stand against overwhelming odds. His act is justly regarded as a "sporting" thing to do, and one that reflects credit on the race. The newspapers so handled this case that the people of a great city and a considerable portion of the country at large yielded this meed of admiration to a desperado who had cost society heavily through many years of his life and who sought to inflict the utmost damage at the end. No one who has given thought to the matter can doubt that such false sentiment is destructive of law and order and manhood.

CASE.—An actress made her third attempt at suicide giving as her reason the refusal of her wealthy lover to marry her. A newspaper sought the capitalist and printed his two-column interview giving the story of the girl's infatuation resulting in her three attempts at suicide, in spite of the millionaire's desperate efforts to keep clear of entanglements and his innocence of wrong doing.

Comment.—The story was pernicious in that it permitted a man by no means absolved of guilt to pose as a martyr of circumstances and a foolish woman. It supplied palatable poison to the sickly sentimentalists. It tended to elevate the man to the pedestal of the matinee idol. Much better judgment is shown by the newspaper that withholds the privilege of the interview—the journalistic form through which an individual speaks directly to multitudes—from seducers, thieves, and prostitutes who happen to be booked at police headquarters, reserving it for men and women of distinction who have some excuse for a moment's occupancy of the newspaper soap box.

CASE.—

Twenty years behind the grim gray walls of the Oklahoma state penitentiary was the price Freddie O'Neil knew he would have to pay when he came to Kansas City six weeks ago.

But Freddie, notorious motor-car thief and "bad man," didn't care.

For Freddie, whate'er the cost, wanted to see a little lad, on whose chubby face he had not laid eyes in three years.

"All the time I was in the 'stir' his little face hovered before me," he said. "It was awful! I would wake up from a dream in which he had his arms around my neck and hear him call, 'Daddy.'"

"That's what brought me back, fellows," he mumbled, his eyes welling with tears.

Comment.—A "sob" story in which the sentimental appeal is absurdly overdone. But the disadvantages of a criminal's life appear so clearly, in the background, as to render the article almost constructive.

Brutalizing Effect of Crime News

Another type of crime story that is not often defended, but is nevertheless all too common, is that which contains lurid

features or disgusting details. The word brutalizing seems to describe it aptly.

To the degree in which we become interested or absorbed in reading or hearing a narrative, we "participate" in the action. This, of course, means much in the enrichment of our lives. No person is the victim of such humdrum conditions that, given a healthy imagination, he can not, through good literature, acquire a world of experience by participation in the lives of others. But this precious faculty, like all others, is no great respecter of the materials with which it works. Given an invitation by a news writer with some ability in description and narration, and it will take us into places which we were better off not to have visited and show us scenes from which, if literally brought before us, we would shrink in horror. When these quasi real experiences are of the sort that dull our finer feelings, lessen our repugnance for what is vile and our shrinking from what is cruel; when they tend to make us cold-blooded or callous, they are accurately described as brutalizing. And it is not merely a fact of science but also a matter of general observation that abhorrence of gruesome things is lessened by familiarity.

The newspaper which takes us daily into the chamber of horrors is educating us to tolerate horrors, to accept them as a matter of course, to be indifferent to their perpetration, or even to take a hand in them ourselves. There is nothing fanciful about such deductions. Every mature person has the proof within himself. Familiarity with crime on the part of immature and undisciplined and defective human beings enhances morbid curiosity and the desire for abnormal experience and predisposes to yielding to temptation. It is brutalizing.

CASE.—Two bank robbers were shot by policemen. The newspaper story was illustrated with pictures from photographs showing a close view of the bodies lying in the morgue, with clothing removed where the bullets had entered, and arrows to indicate the holes.

Comment.—It can not be denied that such a picture is fascinating to many persons—in some degree to all persons. The knife with which murder has just been committed, a

piece of the rope with which a man has been hanged, the room in which notorious criminals did their deeds—any of these will draw a crowd, and represented pictorially in a newspaper, will sell papers. Such things appeal to very deep primitive emotions, but they are antisocial as well as elemental. Yellow journalism demonstrated that horrors give pleasurable shocks, but it has also demonstrated to an increasing proportion of journalists that such shocks are unfavorable to social control and adjustment.

That exposure to brutalizing experiences is not a means of combating brutality is now well understood. Wide censure was recently given to the views of a country sheriff who insisted on exposing the body of a dead bandit to public view in order that the youth of the community "might be influenced to mend their ways."

CASE.—A newspaper secured, and printed in a half-page space, a picture of "Russian officers hanging patriots at Tabriz." Eight bodies hung suspended by ropes and the officers were proudly posed beside them. Even the expression on the faces of the victims was revoltingly plain.

Comment.—To be sure, this is an unusually gruesome case, but it is not different in kind, only in degree, from many cases that may be found in any day's newspaper output. For its own protection civilized society has excluded itself from the scenes of its legal executions, but the press is still permitted to take its readers into the death chamber through the medium of vivid descriptive writing. And it must not be forgotten that word pictures are only slightly less realistic than photographs and are far more effective in transmitting details that the camera cannot record.

CASE.—Two women were charged with having poisoned fifteen or more men, including their several successive husbands. Murder had been their avocation for some years. One newspaper heading announced that, "Gay music rang through residence of 'Mrs. Bluebeard' while body of dead husband lay in house." The scenes of the various murders were all reconstructed.

Comment.—This is an example of the story dealing with an extraordinary crime. It would seem that the more atrocious

and diabolical the act, the greater the effort made by some newspapers to place it realistically before the minds of its readers—women, children, morons, and the rest. One particularly nauseating case, involving a popular film idol, was fed daily to the public, over a period of weeks, and did more than any other occurrence of the year to bring American journalism into contempt.

Often the headlines alone are enough to warrant barring a paper from the home: "Thirteen-year-old Othello Denies Knifing His Desdemona," or, "Fourteen, Golden Haired, Admits He is a Burglar," or, "Youngest Shoplifter Acts Like Old Hand."

CASE.—One of the most notorious crimes in recent years, followed by an equally notorious trial, was the murder of a prominent American architect by a rich young man whose motive for the act was vengeance for alleged wrongs suffered by the young woman, who afterwards became his wife, at the hands of the man he killed. The great majority of newspapers carried the story on their front pages for several weeks and used their best talent to extract from it every ounce of human interest, every thrill, every shock to the ordinary sense of decency.

Comment.—The so-called "sob sister" has a legitimate place in journalism. It would be absurd to condemn emotional writing, as such, or even sentimentalism. The only question involved is that of purpose and effect. An emotional handling of the tragedy in the death of a child under the wheels of a speeding motor truck may be just what the community needs to rouse it to preventive measures. It may be in the best sense educational. Innumerable other cases may be found in any day's happenings in a great city. But the object of the sentimentalism in the present case was frankly commercial and its value commercially, its attractiveness for the public, rested upon those characteristics of the human animal which do him the least credit. In such a case the newspapers take advantage of our weaknesses: they capitalize the baseness in our nature—and despise us while they are doing it. Many of them know they are taking filthy money; some of them merely do not stop to think. They swallow the common traditions

of journalism and leave it to others to think what they are about and work towards the betterment of the profession.

News of Suicides

Victims of discouragement are extremely suggestible in the line of their depressed mental attitude. Not a few instances have been recorded in which successive cases of suicide by the same method, sometimes an unusual method, seem to have resulted from publicity given to the methods used in the first case.

CASE.—A young banker in Georgia took bichloride of mercury and lay dying for a week. He held a reception at his home and bade all his friends a personal and affectionate farewell. Papers all over the country printed daily stories of the case. It was noticeable in the weeks that followed his death that numerous stories of bichloride of mercury poisoning appeared under date lines from widely separated parts of the country. Many of these were suicides, and the natural conclusion was that the Georgia affair had worked as a suggestion to morbid persons.

Comment.—Due account must be taken of the fact that correspondents would be likely to use the facts concerning all bichloride of mercury poisonings which came their way, because of the exceptional interest resulting from the case just chronicled widely. Nevertheless it seems fair to say that, whether or not the relation of cause to effect existed, there was no justification for publicity as to the details of the case.

Many newspapers now recognize their responsibilities in this matter by refraining from mentioning the kind of poison used by a suicide. It is doubtful that the means used by any suicide should be reported. Certainly if it is new or ingenious it may appeal strongly to the imagination of some unfortunate person.

CASE.—Neighbors heard a couple quarreling and telephoned the police. When the officers arrived the man had killed his wife and himself with a butcher knife. The deed was done in the presence of a small child. The story was printed with brutalizing detail.

Comment.—Impressions received from such narratives not only harden the sensibilities of readers but afford positive

suggestion to individuals in unhappy circumstances. The utmost restraint is required in handling such news.

CASE.—The "Diamond Queen" brought back from Paris to face charges of large jewelry thefts in New York, ended her life dramatically by swallowing poison as she was being taken to the Tombs. "You'll never take me there alive," she cried as she snatched a phial of poison from her handbag and swallowed the contents.

Comment.—A certain type of mind is much impressed by a theatrical exit from life. Suicide pacts have a strong emotional appeal. Jumping from bridges or high buildings recommends itself to some as a heroic means of escaping from the trials of existence. Stories which treat such occurrences with dramatic intensity make suicide attractive to the despondent.

CASE.—A 63-year-old farmer committed suicide and cremated his own body by jumping into a huge brush pile near his home, setting fire to the pile and then blowing his brains out with a shotgun. Neighbors said the man had carefully collected the brush pile for a year. He had been despondent for months and had frequently referred to his shotgun as a faithful pal which would some day do its duty. After a restless night, he arose early, according to his widow, and left the house with the excuse that he heard some one in the chicken house. Later his wife observed the brush pile in flames.

Comment.—A gruesome case without constructive value and one likely to deepen the morbidity of persons defeated by hard circumstances.

CASE.—A daughter of a wealthy manufacturer, with all the benefits of a college education, and the promise of a successful career in vaudeville, was found unconscious in a cheap hotel with a man who was dying from the effects of poison. The young woman died also. The story concluded:

This is the final chapter in the career of a girl who had everything in life—beauty, wealth, education, friends, and talent.

Comment.—Probably less negative in character than most accounts of suicide pacts.

CASE.—The body of a boy thirteen years old was found suspended by a rope tied to a rafter in the barn at the rear of his home in Chicago. It was believed that he had committed suicide by tying himself with the rope and jumping off a pile of wood nearby. The father said the boy had read much about another young boy who had been found hanged a few weeks previously.

Comment.—Since each successive suicide was bigger news by reason of the cumulative effect, the headlines should, logically, have grown larger and larger and therefore more powerfully suggestive. Such practice is in line with the gruesome remark of a writer on "Is Suicide a Sin?" who found a causal relation between stories of suicides and subsequent suicides, but declared that since only degenerates would be susceptible to such influence it was a good thing to employ this means of getting them out of the way.

This theory was not saved from brutality by any lack of sincerity, as was a statement by the English master of irony, G. B. Shaw, that "Reading about crimes does not make us criminals, but rather causes any propensities we may have in that direction to waste themselves harmlessly through the imagination, just as reading about high virtues does not make us heroes and heroines, but wastes our heroic impulses in precisely the same manner."

In Palliation of Crime

No doubt many acts that are crimes according to the strict letter of the law are justifiable; but a newspaper is treading on dangerous ground when it undertakes to establish this fact in any specific instance. Usually the result is a lessening of respect for law and a consequent increase in lawlessness.

CASE.—A man shot another for "invading the sanctity of his home." The reporter described the romantic courtship and the ideal happiness of the couple before the invader appeared and the tragedy of the husband's disillusionment.

Comment.—The purpose of the story seemed to be so to arouse the reader's sympathy as to obscure the fact that the wronged husband had legal recourse and that he had committed a crime. The probable effect on the reader was to arouse resentment at the course of the law in the case.

CASE.—A man was deluded into paying \$15 for a bogus automobile license. The story made him ridiculous and pictured the swindler as a clever rogue.

Comment.—The reporter, no doubt innocently, employed humor in such manner as to make crime appear innocuous.

CASE.—A woman was tried on the charge of having killed her husband's stenographer. The story of her acquittal played up her own emotion and the almost hysterical enthusiasm of the crowd.

Comment.—The effect was to lead the reader to say, "I don't care if she was guilty, I'm glad she got off."

CASE.—A man was tried for murder. The report of the plea of the attorney for the defense was illustrated by a half-tone picture showing the defendant bowed in grief, his daughter at his side with her face buried in a handkerchief, and other relatives weeping during the lawyer's impassioned utterances.

Comment.—What a cruel law that makes people suffer! Emotional interest in criminals as persons is not conducive to social order.

CASE.—A report of a decision of the United States Supreme Court on the migratory bird law contained an interview with a hunter who said, "We went right along shooting ducks at such times as the shooting was good and only three arrests were ever made by the men drawing fat salaries to enforce the law."

Comment.—Contempt for law received the tacit approval of this newspaper, which editorially, no doubt, would loudly declare that laws must be obeyed until repealed.

CASE.—The adoption of the Eighteenth Amendment was followed by a widespread condonation and endorsement by newspapers of law violation.

Comment.—No exception is here taken to efforts by newspapers to have the law modified or repealed. The newspaper that believed prohibition to be a bad measure had a duty as well as a right to oppose it. But the encouragement of law violation is another matter. In news, features, editorials, cartoons, and joke columns, many newspapers presented the boot-legger and his patron as admirable persons, crusaders in the cause of personal freedom. The law, the courts and other

enforcement agencies, were made to appear contemptible. The difference between a constructive campaign for modification of the law and a destructive campaign for lawlessness seems easy enough to understand, but an incredible number of editors pretended not to comprehend it. The result has been an incalculable bill for organized society to pay.

CASE.—Sensational newspapers, and some others, have expressed their opposition to court decisions, usually decisions having political aspects, by attacks upon the courts themselves. Not constructive attacks embodying remedies for alleged imperfections, but attacks calculated to destroy confidence not only in particular judges but also in our judicial system.

Comment.—Immigrants knowing little of our language, and the masses of uneducated people in cities acquire from these papers having huge circulations, highly distorted ideas of American institutions. The results in maladjustment and discontent do not need to be described to be appreciated by any student of social affairs.

Stories of Wrecked Homes

Doubtless some of the unpleasant news about the disintegration of families is salutary. The public has a right to know how its great human institutions such as marriage and the family are functioning in modern life. It is not to be expected that only sugar-coated news will be furnished by the press. But on the other hand newspapers are not to be excused from taking some thought as to the influence likely to be exerted by stories dealing with social disorders.

CASE.—The following two-column head in Gothic type sufficiently describes the story: "Colonel, Accused of Affair with 'Woman across the Hall' Calls Wife Love Monopolist. 'She Demanded My Exclusive Worship and Love' says Army Man of Mate Who Sued Him for Divorce."

Comment.—The story written from the standpoint of the offender and embodying his claims for justification is anything but constructive. It might consistently be printed in a paper that had frankly announced a policy of combating our marriage laws, but not elsewhere. Even if the whole story were told, so as to present the truth about the incident, it would be ruled

out by the fact that it is not significant news. Significant news of this class is that which may help to guide intelligent public opinion to a sound judgment as to the need for a change in our laws governing the formation, preservation, or disestablishment of the home.

CASE.—A married man and a girl preferred death to separation forced upon them by relatives. Both took poison and died. The story was handled in a sensational manner with pictures.

Comment.—The fact that a story has human interest and is full of heart throbs does not in itself justify publication. It merely furnishes an excuse to thoughtless or irresponsible journalism.

CASE.—A minister was found dead beside the road near a small town in New Jersey, and near his body was that of the wife of the janitor of his church. The minister's wife was living. No theory as to the crime was substantiated by enough evidence to lead to an arrest.

The metropolitan newspapers saw in the case the materials for sensational handling. During the several weeks from the date of the crime to the end of the grand jury investigation, seventy-five or more correspondents and photographers were kept on the ground entailing a total expense estimated at \$100,000. One newspaper alone was said to have used 350,000 words on the event.

Comment.—A shameless exhibition of the eagerness to exploit crime for profit. The public was entertained as by a detective story or a play of mystery, but it was not clean entertainment, and the cost in suffering to innocent persons was great. No good social purpose was served.

CASE.—In any day's grist of the divorce mill are many cases based on trivialities exemplifying the vagaries of human nature.

Comment.—Treatment of such matters in a spirit of frivolity is productive of cynicism ill calculated to promote the business of good living. It is self-evident that anything which strengthens the notion in immature minds that social bonds are to be regarded lightly is antisocial.

CASE.—A woman was charged with causing the death, by arsenate of lead poison, of a man with whom she had lived as

common-law wife and to whom she had been legally married six hours before he died. The woman declared she expected to become a mother within three or four months, but declined a medical examination. These and other details were printed in many newspapers.

Comment.—An example of the obnoxious story, though by no means an extreme example, that stimulates the public taste for the scandalous. Decent newspapers do not purvey filthy details uncovered in court proceedings except through some pitiful lapse of discretion. Life is made tolerable by reticences. Science and literature may tear aside all the veils for the sake of the public health and in the search for a surer, sounder basis of morality, but seldom is such a proceeding within the province of journalism. Few reporters are adequately prepared for such an undertaking. Nor is it true that the public clamors for disclosures of the intimacies of private lives. What the public will accept in a careless mood is by no means what the public wants.

Publicity as Punishment

The newspaper as an agency for the maintenance of social order holds constantly over the heads of those having criminal tendencies its menacing scourge of publicity. Not that the newspaper is to be regarded as an extra-legal retributive and corrective institution, a sort of private court in which cases are determined and punishment assessed, "You are guilty and your sentence is one column on the front page." But rather that in the everyday discharge of its duty of telling its readers what they have a right to know, the paper incidentally metes out punishment to those who cannot afford to have their acts made public. One of the wise sayings attributed to Emerson is, "Light is the great policeman."

To be sure there are notoriety seekers requiring special treatment. Usually their performances are harmless, as for example, the girl who maintained a blood temperature of 114 degrees for several days, to the amazement of the whole country, until her clever method of playing tricks on the thermometer was discovered. Or the more reprehensible case in which a girl advertised for a husband, specifying qualifications, and

made public the answers received. Usually some irresponsible reporter has a large share in framing such specifications and the answers, in order to concoct a salable story or series of stories.

Rarely do criminals seek publicity, though some of them pose complacently enough when the spot light finds them.

The complexities of the question, when to give publicity and when to withhold it, have been examined in the chapter on suppression.

Not only in this way does the newspaper participate in the administration of justice, but also by way of keeping a watchful eye upon the police and the courts, for the public has a right to know whether or not these agencies for law enforcement are effective or inadequate.

CASE.—Following is the lead of a top-head story in a city paper:

The city's courts dealt crime a savage blow last week. For years the criminal calendar had been clogged. Last week, however, brought a new order of things. Three additional criminal courts were established, making six in all, and the judiciary went after the three thousand cases awaiting disposition.

The six criminal courts were in session four days and in that time disposed of more than one hundred cases of a more serious nature. The cases were many and various, and special attention was given to those involving homicide.

Then followed a list of those whose cases had been decided, with the sentence given in each case.

Comment.—A constructive article on the improvement in the city's legal machinery. An unmistakable warning to the underworld.

Emphasizing the Penalties of Crime

Certainty of punishment, rather than severity, is the most effective deterrent of crime. A high degree of certainty that a crime will be detected, the criminal apprehended, a swift and just disposal of the case made by the courts, and no pardoning power invoked by influence will insure a low per cent of crime in any community. The more information that can be

published showing such conditions to exist, the more effective will be the newspaper's part in maintaining order.

CASE.—A spectacular post-office robbery at Toledo was the subject of scare heads and exhaustive descriptions in the newspapers of the country. The robbers were not apprehended at once, but in the course of a few months twenty-five men and women had been arrested and tried. Of these, twenty-one were found guilty and sentenced to terms in the penitentiary aggregating 184 years. Five of them received sentences that were practically for life. Items referring to these convictions were printed from time to time, but no newspaper saw the news value and the social value in a conspicuous story summarizing the retributory aspect of the case.

Comment.—Newspaper readers in general, knowing how great was the amount stolen and not being adequately informed that most of the money was recovered and the robbers punished, were left with the impression that the crime had been immensely profitable. A lawyer, pleading before an editorial association for greater vigilance in giving publicity to the punishment of crime, said:

Punishment for crime is utterly and absolutely useless unless such punishment gets publicity. And only the press can give it publicity. To the extent that the press fails in that obligation, to that extent the press is responsible for the contempt of law and the crime for which this country is notorious among nations. But, to the extent that the press will feature punishment, as well as crime, to that extent it will give force to deterrence and create a new respect for law and a surprising decrease in crime.

CASE.—The following is quoted from a newspaper report:

Doors of the state penitentiary to-day swung open to receive three brothers, who must serve up to a maximum of twenty-one years for highway robbery.

With their mother dead of a broken heart, the three men started on their long sentences, which officers said came at the end of a long road of crime.

Absolutely incorrigible, was the message of the sheriff to the warden of the prison when he delivered the three brothers. Long lists of charges are on the police blotters against them. One has averaged an arrest every two months for the last fifteen years, officers said.

The family, except the mother and a fourth brother, has been against the law for years, according to officers. Three years ago the father died, happy in the knowledge he and his sons had kept out of the penitentiary. The mother's and brother's pleadings with the three after their father's death only hardened them. All are large, raw-boned men of a fighting nature. Charges on which they were arrested time and again ranged from violation of the prohibition law to highway robbery.

Comment.—Such a story tells enough of the truth about a life of crime to make such a career anything but attractive.

CASE.—An account of a defalcation by a bank official described at some length the early successes of the young man, his happy home life, and his fine business prospects, all compromised by yielding to a temptation to get rich quickly.

Comment.—The journalist need not moralize in order to drive home the lesson that industry, honesty, thrift, truthfulness, and decency pay better than their opposites. He does not step out of his sphere as a journalist into that of the preacher when he brings into a story the facts that furnish a background. That is the way in which he makes the story truthful as well as accurate. A story which paints clearly the cost of crime or vice to the participant, as well as to society, is constructive.

CASE.—A youth of sixteen was sentenced to death in the electric chair. He had been convicted of killing a Brooklyn shopkeeper while attempting, with two other youths, to rob a store.

"This is the saddest act that I have had to perform since I have been a member of this court," the Justice said in passing sentence.

Comment.—The effect of such an item will depend somewhat on one's views as to capital punishment, but certainly an impression is gained of the inexorableness of the law and its freedom from any vindictive spirit.

CASE.—The internal revenue collector for a state in the Middle West joined forces with the prohibition enforcement director and issued an appeal to all law-abiding citizens to aid in the enforcement of the law. One city paper carried a two-column story on the front page and related a number of in-

stances in which the vigilance and determination of the officers had brought about detection and conviction of bootleggers and operators of stills. A little sentiment was injected into the story by an account of how the internal revenue collector raised money to care for the destitute family of one of the convicted men.

Comment.—A highly constructive article, only the lead of which contained spot news, but all of which was interesting and informative. The theory that the enforcement of law is everybody's business was not explicitly stated but was so effectively suggested as to make the article an important factor in promoting better citizenship.

CASE.—A young man, convicted of burglary, had been sentenced to the penitentiary for ten to twenty years. When he was taken to prison a newspaper assigned a reporter to accompany him and write the story of his first day's experience. The story filled five columns and was headed, "When a Youth Goes to Prison." The arrival at the barred door, the conversation with the record clerk and with the deputy warden were reported.

"Can I ask a question?" inquired the prisoner.

"Yes," the clerk answered.

"How soon do I get a chance to ask for a parole?"

"In ten years."

The deputy warden asked him about his schooling.

"I went to high school and could have gone to college if I'd wanted to."

"Why didn't you?"

"Oh, I got with the gang down on the corner and we didn't want to be like the sissy boys."

"Where did you get the hunch to start breaking in houses?"

"From a movie."

"Stop lying! Where did you get the hunch?"

"So help me God, warden, I'm telling you the truth," the boy reiterated, "from the movie."

The incidents of his first day in prison were related with a simplicity overwhelmingly effective: the meeting with other prisoners, the first descent into the coal mine, the beginning of the long term at hard labor. That night a trusty reported to the warden:

"I'm worried about that new man. I think he's sick."

"What's the matter," the warden asked.

"Well, he was workin' in our coal room, and I come in from a trip with the mule and I crept up on him sort of quiet, because the ceiling is darned low there, you know, and I saw he wasn't working at all but was kind of digging with his pick at a shelf of coal and there was tear streaks down through the dirt on his face."

"Didn't you ask him what the matter was?"

"Yes, and all he said was, 'Forget that you saw me like this; but ten years is such a long, long time.' I kind of believe the kid's sick."

"No, he isn't sick. He's just in prison, that's all."

An editorial note sums it all up: "It is a safe bet that if the average young man had to go through one day of prison routine he'd never commit a crime."

Comment.—It was not a "sob story," just a plain narrative full of truth, and a fine example of the constructive treatment of crime. Accounts of escape from prison, of the granting of pardons or paroles, of the return to crime by men who have served out their terms are common enough. But the ghastly truth about confinement in prison, ghastly at least for most prisoners, even under the best of modern conditions, is seldom told. This is merely another example of the fact that the newspaper which merely utilizes the facts that are thrown to the surface by the day's eventualities may be giving some of its readers false notions about life; and that it owes it to them to seek and present the truth.

"Equal Justice for All"

Generalizations about the beauties of impartial justice have less force, if indeed they have any force at all, than insistence upon impartial justice in a concrete case. They are virtually void of meaning because so bromidic and because so often uttered as agreeable platitudes by people without understanding or sincerity. Action in a concrete case is clearly defined and often requires courage. A newspaper which takes up such a case often wins commendation, if no imputation of malice can be made and when the time and circumstance are ripe.

CASE.—A wealthy man killed a relatively poor man. There were no witnesses of the act. The man's defense was that the slain man had attempted to blackmail him and, angered at failure, had attacked him. There was a grand-jury investigation resulting in a trial for murder. The case was dismissed upon motion of the prosecuting attorney. Much criticism was uttered against the officials for their apparent desire to aid the accused in concealing the nature of the alleged blackmail. Letters received by the newspapers showed a widespread feeling that the man's wealth had been a factor in preventing more vigorous prosecution. One metropolitan paper assigned a reporter to the case. He studied the minutes of the grand jury and other evidence and became convinced that the court proceedings had been farcical. He found that a large proportion of the people distrusted the officials and believed that money could buy anything in that state. He so reported to his newspaper.

The paper undertook to force a reopening of the case. Much publicity was given to it. The governor was appealed to. After a campaign of some weeks, the governor acted by referring the matter to the attorney-general. The result was the reopening of the case.

Comment.—The newspaper's angle of approach to this case was such that all the news and opinion published regarding the crime had a constructive character. Those who question the propriety of dynamic journalism will, of course, maintain that the paper went outside its legitimate sphere as a newspaper in conducting a campaign against miscarriage of justice. That point of view limits too narrowly the function of the press.

The Newspaper in the Rôle of Detective

Just how far a newspaper should go in assisting in the apprehension of criminals is a debatable matter.

CASE.—A metropolitan newspaper ran a series of pictures of men wanted by the police, giving both front and profile views and describing in detail the appearance of each man. The offenses for which they were sought were also described.

Comment.—This sort of publicity sometimes leads to apprehension of the criminal but more often gives rise to false alarms, annoyances, and embarrassments through overzealous

efforts of inexperienced persons. It is not a feature which can be commended except in rare instances.

CASE.—A newspaper in a large city assigned a reporter to follow and apprehend an absconding bank president who had eluded the police. The chase extended through several foreign countries and ended with the arrest of the criminal and an exclusive story of great interest to the public in the columns of the pursuing newspaper.

Comment.—Many newspapers favor such enterprises as a means of scoring beats on their competitors. More of this sort of thing would be done were it not for the heavy expense usually involved. The temptation to say dogmatically that this is not journalism must be resisted. To be sure, the detective methods of the yellow journal were and are despicable; their vileness lay in the ends for which they were used—the publication of scandal or the levying of blackmail—and also in the nature of the methods themselves—searching waste-paper baskets, prying open desks, stealing photographs, peeking through transoms, or eavesdropping. If there is doubt as to the sincerity of the police in detecting crime or apprehending the criminal or if there is a compelling reason why the public should have access to the mind of an offender against law or custom who has not been found, there seems to be no serious objection to a newspaper's joining in the pursuit, though such activities do more or less violence to one widely accepted concept of journalism. Whether or not the prestige of the paper will be more compromised than augmented must be decided in each case.

CASE.—A newspaper, believing that the chief of police was incompetent, conducted a campaign against him by printing all manner of evidence tending to show that a "crime wave" was sweeping the city as a result of insufficient police activity. Long lists of petty offenses were printed. Abuse and ridicule were heaped upon officers and police commissioners. The insecurity of life and property was the subject of daily editorials on the front page.

Comment.—Such campaigns are generally looked upon cynically by the public, as being at bottom political. In so far as they are taken seriously, they engender a state of community "nerves" that is to be deplored. It has been said that even a

second-rate city editor can produce a crime wave on twenty minutes' notice. It is equally true that if he does so merely for the sake of creating a sensation, he should go to jail for disturbing the peace. Moreover, it is doubtful that this method of opposing a police administration is ever quite justifiable. Inefficiency of the police can be presented to the public without such sensationalism.

CASE.—Pay-roll robberies became common in a city and the newspapers promoted the organization of a citizens' committee to coöperate with the police in frustrating and capturing the bandits.

Comment.—A fine piece of public service.

A director of the crime commission for Chicago expressed what will appear to some as an exaggeration, but it is nevertheless provocative of thought:

If the daily newspapers in this city decide to-night that crime shall be cut fifty per cent by the first of next May, it will be done. If any one newspaper in Chicago determines to-night that crime in this city shall be reduced fifty per cent by the first of next May, every other newspaper in Chicago will be forced by public opinion to take the same stand and by May 1, Chicago crime figures will be cut in half.

If newspapers decide to decrease crime they will first insist that criminals be apprehended. Is there sheriff or police official that can withstand their demand that prosecutions be vigorous, judges firm, and jurors honest? Is there prosecutor, judge or juror that can withstand the pressure, when exerted by the press of the city, that penalties when imposed be executed? Is there official or lawyer or criminal that would attempt to defeat justice with the newspapers playing the searchlight of publicity upon them? That's all there is to it. It sounds simple. It is simple. But it is not easy of fulfillment.

It is interesting to note that within a short time after this statement was published, a newspaper in the city opened a campaign of publicity against vice by reporting the testimony before a board investigating houses of prostitution. Many excellent people were shocked and made protest. The newspaper maintained that vice flourishes in secret and that knowledge of its ruinous consequences is a more powerful restraining in-

fluence than either silence or veiled allusions to "social diseases."

Helping to Convict a Criminal

However justifiable may be a newspaper's activities in helping directly to apprehend a criminal, the dangers in "trials by newspaper" are such that the only safe course seems to be strict limitation to an uncolored and conservative report of the court proceedings. The many notorious cases in which newspapers have so prejudiced the public for or against an accused man or woman as to make a fair trial next to impossible have been the basis of some of the sharpest criticisms of journalism. Clarence Darrow, a veteran of the law, declared to *Editor and Publisher*, though he subsequently modified the statement:

Trial by jury is being rapidly destroyed in America by the manner in which the newspapers handle all sensational cases.

I don't know what should be done about it. The truth is the courts and the lawyers don't like to proceed against newspapers. They are too powerful. As the law stands to-day there is no important tribunal case where the newspapers are not guilty of contempt of court day after day. All lawyers know it, all judges know it, and all newspapers know it. But nothing is done about it.

No new laws are necessary. The court has full jurisdiction to see that no one influences a verdict or a decision. But every one is afraid to act!

The machinery of justice has a right to the help of the press in its functioning, and the most obvious avenue of service is through repressing rather than intensifying such a state of the public mind as makes calm judgment difficult.

One legal authority states the matter thus:

The newspaper is an unqualified evil in so far as it affects the trial of crime. Since the abolition of public executions, it has been the policy of the law to hide all sensational details connected with the punishment of criminals. The object of most newspapers is just the reverse of this. By picturesque methods they try to make their readers see every incident from the conception of the crime in the brain of the man on trial down to the jury's verdict and the punishment, if there be punishment. Consequently the newspapers must always come in conflict with the courts.

Which extreme view should be modified in the light of contrary opinion to the effect that newspapers have helped greatly in the apprehension and punishment of criminals, and in the maintenance of respect for law. The following legal opinion is justly appreciative as well as sound:

Publicity is almost the only safeguard of the proper administration of justice; hence the full and free publication of proceedings in open court is privileged. . . . The report must not, however, be published in defiance of a prohibition by the court, nor would the privilege attach to any indecent or blasphemous matter contained in a true report. . . . The report must also be fair, accurate, and impartial, and the writer is not at liberty to impute falsehood to a witness, or to add comments of his own tending to give false color to the testimony.

Warnings against Crime

The most effective warnings against crime are stories showing the inevitability of a penalty, either by detection and punishment, even after many years, or through the mental suffering, and perhaps physical, of a fugitive from justice, as depicted in belated confessions. Men who are contemplating their first steps in crime do not expect to be caught. They credit themselves with superior cleverness. Publication of facts tending to discourage belief in this fallacy is a public service.

CASE.—A dying bandit professed to see the folly of crime and asked to make a statement. The local paper printed the following story:

"There's nothing in a life of crime, and I want you, Cliff, for my sake, to be a good citizen in the future. That's the one message I want to leave with you before I go."

This was the final message the other night of Earl Hanner, youthful gunman, bandit and confessed slayer of Avera M. Hudson, policeman, to Clifford Riley, alleged accomplice in several crimes which Hanner confessed.

Paralyzed from the chest down and slowly weakening from wounds he received in a revolver fight with detectives before his arrest, Hanner has given up his fight for life. When the policemen on guard at his bedside changed at roll-call they were told by attendants that Hanner had not long to live.

The bandit asked that the detectives to whom he had confessed his many thefts and hold-ups be called to his bedside and that Riley, who is facing a charge of grand larceny, also be brought.

"I want to tell you this," began Hanner when the group gathered about his bed, "in the presence of the police who arrested you, that it doesn't pay to be bad. You can see what I have come to. When you get out, stick it out and be a good citizen. Goodby."

The two shook hands, Riley was led from the room, and a minister came to prepare the dying bandit for his fate.

Comment.—The story is constructive. A report of the speedy punishment of a crime, in contrast with the usual story of the law's delays, is wholesome.

An excellent example of a constructive crime story, with its unusual narrative lead—preceded by a boxed paragraph from the judge's statement in pronouncing sentence—is the following from the *Kansas City Star*:

Mike Nigro, an Italian youth, 23 years old, grew up in the North Side of Kansas City, with a knockabout idea of citizenship. He looked to his precinct committeeman for law. He called upon his associates—other Italians older in the ways of the North Side—for advice. Mike had his own ideas about right and wrong, perhaps because no one from south of Eighth street thought to tell him different.

Mike learned to-day from an agency of his government one of the things his swarthy companions neglected to tell him. It was that the United States had laws to protect the adopted sons from other countries, as well as their sons who may have been neglected in the melting process of citizenry.

The youth stood before Judge Reeves convicted on two counts of selling narcotics and using counterfeit revenue stamps. The court considered leniency, of course, but the United States has laws, Mike found, that cover and protect all.

Five years in the federal prison at Leavenworth and two fines totaling \$5,000, the United States decreed. His youth probably saved him from the maximum of twenty years at hard labor. . . . Judge Reeves told Mike some things he never had thought about before.

Warnings to the Public

Crime news properly written has its constructive influence in warning the public as to the methods by which criminals operate.

CASE.—A newspaper report contained the following:

T. C. Cross, wealthy land owner and farmer is ahead \$20 and the police are holding two alleged confidence men as the result of the farmer's visit to this city.

With Mrs. Cross, Cross has been stopping at the Touraine Hotel. A few days ago he met Mr. Beath. Beath took the Crosses to a theater, and treated them to a sumptuous dinner. He was a good dresser and his manners were perfect.

Saturday Cross and Beath were down town. Beath met a friend named Strong. Strong had some money for Beath which, it was confided, had been made on the wheat market. Beath made Cross accept a \$5 bill out of what he termed his "cleanup." Strong was again met Sunday. That time three \$5 bills were forced on Beath.

When Cross was asked to meet Beath and Strong at Twelfth and Central Street last night, the farmer notified the police.

Detectives saw Cross meet Beath and Strong. Strong produced a telegram from a "friend" telling which way to place his money on wheat. Cross was asked if he did not want to make a "cleanup." The detectives appeared.

Cross laughed as the two men were taken to police headquarters.

"I may be a farmer, but I wasn't born yesterday," he said.

Comment.—Such stories exposing the methods of confidence men have great educational value for potential victims. So also warnings against fake agents or peddlers operating in the community or bad check "artists" who profit by any relaxation of vigilance on the part of merchants.

CASE.—Complaints from the victims of pickpockets were more than usually numerous at police headquarters. Finally a former member of the police force detected a pickpocket at work on a street car and captured him.

The incident was played up in a half-column space, with a list of all the cases reported the preceding day. Methods used to distract the attention of victims were described.

Comment.—The story was educational. The danger that some youth might derive from it an ambition to steal seems slight and it was certain that a great many people would be placed on their guard.

CASE.—A middle-aged man in a strange city became acquainted at a café with an attractive young woman. He took her riding in his new automobile. The next day the car disappeared. The girl promised to keep watch for it. Soon

after he reached home she wrote him she was on the track of the car but needed some money for expenses. He sent money several times, then returned to the city and found the car in her possession. She told the police he had made her a present of it.

The facts were handled humorously at the expense of the man involved.

Comment.—The story should have value as a warning, though in certain lines men seem loath to learn anything from the experience of others. Generally speaking, exposure of the methods used by fakers and crooks of all kinds is salutary. But in any doubtful case the story should be suppressed on the theory that the evil of starting one suggestible person in crime outweighs the good in warning a hundred persons against some one form of dishonesty which will probably not be repeated.

Promoting a Clean-up of Crime Conditions

Part of the people—a regrettably small part—are interested in good government all of the time, and all of the people become interested in good government part of the time—if the press does its duty. Their close personal interests obstruct, in most people's minds, their broader community interests, though the latter may at any time become intensely personal. Crime, for example, is left for the police to handle because it is a general community matter; but it may become a serious individual matter to any one in the community at any moment. Properly enough its control is left to the police, on condition that such stimulus as human beings need to keep them at highest efficiency be not withheld from officers of the law by their employer, the public. For crime creeps insidiously into unsuspected places, it forms amazing alliances, it arranges incredible compromises with representatives of law and order. The corrective is the periodic wave of reform accompanying an aroused public opinion. The excitement "soon blows over," to be sure, but its effect is about the best that can be hoped for, human nature being what it is. It is far better than nothing. The advance agent, likewise the personal conductor, of the reform wave is the newspaper.

CASE.—A prominent young man died from the effects of the drug habit. His wife was willing that publicity be given to the cause of his death in order to warn others.

The pathetic story of the man was told in detail. This was followed, from day to day, by feature stories on the drug evil and news stories on local conditions, including such facts as the percentage of drug addicts in the reformatory and jail. The too indifferent public was compelled to take cognizance of the evil, to become concerned in preventive educational measures as well as in the strict regulation of pharmacists and physicians.

Comment.—Progress goes up hill on an icy road, but the aggregate distance covered by the steps forward is a little more than that in the slips back, though it usually takes all day to achieve a measurable gain.

CASE.—A disgusting case of debauchery ending in a death became known to the newspapers of a Western city. They were well aware that the group represented in the affair was steeped in depravity and lawlessness.

The utmost publicity was given to the tragedy and the vice conditions back of it.

Comment.—Protests at the publication of the revolting details were made by the ministry, by women's clubs, and others, including a large section of the press itself. Through publicity a certain amount of retribution was brought upon the chief offender; protective measures to improve conditions were forced upon some of the interests involved; the incorrigible element became, for the time, more careful; but the price paid for these benefits was too great. Unpardonable offenses against good taste and decency were committed by many newspapers, some of them acting sincerely on the theory that nothing destroys infection like sunlight, others using that excuse as a balm for their damaged consciences, others brazenly commercializing the filth.

It is a safe estimate that ninety per cent of the good results could have been obtained by decently restricted publicity in this case eliminating ninety per cent of the suggestive and brutalizing details. And along with the net gain to the public would have gone at least an avoidance by journalism of a considerable net loss in public esteem.

CASE.—A man who had lost money in a gambling den committed suicide at the door of the place.

Nothing about the incident itself called for more than brief mention. A newspaper, however, saw a chance to make it the peg on which to hang a big story on gambling conditions in the city. It did so and inaugurated a clean-up campaign.

Comment.—Depravity in dark places is often momentarily illuminated by the lurid flash of a criminal act. Sometimes it is clearly the duty of the newspaper to prolong the period of illumination by the aid of its own searchlight and to persuade as many people as possible to see what is there.

CASE.—Several bank failures were reported in a state having a law providing a depositors' guaranty fund and a state bank examiner. Some of the failures were due to irregularities by bank officials extending over months or even years.

A newspaper with a wide circulation in the state felt that the law or the administration of the law was at fault. It handled the news of the failures from that angle, paving the way for corrective measures.

Comment.—Every journalist, like every banker, realizes that a bank is exceedingly sensitive to publicity. The public is a trifle "jumpy" where its money is concerned. A run on a sound bank has been caused more than once by an injudicious newspaper. But in the present instance care was used not to print anything that would shake confidence in banks. The campaign was entirely constructive.

CASE.—A prominent lawyer was arrested on the charge of bribing a juror. The matter was handled conservatively by local newspapers.

Comment.—Like news of prosecutions for perjury and of disbarment proceedings against unethical attorneys, this story seems to be of the sort that would have beneficial effects on the legal profession and the administration of justice.

CASE.—A judge gave notice that in the future those who violated the speeding ordinance would be given the jail penalty instead of merely a fine. The news was given prominent display.

Comment.—Lectures to prisoners, as well as warnings to the public, uttered by judges from the bench, form construc-

tive news. Neglect by parents to exercise proper supervision of children is sometimes commented on by a judge in words that deserve to be printed prominently in every newspaper. Even in matters somewhat outside the law, a wise judge with the assistance of a newspaper may apply corrective ideas to bad practices. For example, in dismissing a suit against a railroad for damages based on the killing of a motorist by a train, the judge described effectively the carelessness of many drivers of automobiles in ignoring warning signs.

Statistics of Crime

Printing all the crime news of one large city would have the negative effect of reducing crime to the commonplace. People would be in danger of a deadening of their sensibilities and an acceptance of the situation as normal. But the same objection does not hold as to printing crime totals. Such figures are a cold appeal to the intellect. To be told the comparative crime percentages in different countries and in different cities and states can hardly be regarded as other than educational in a positive way. The same holds true, of course, of such studies in the subject as are made by sociologists or criminologists.

Expressions of Individual Opinion by Journalists

From the pronouncements made from time to time by newspapers or by those in charge of newspapers, the following have been chosen as typical:

1. Omit things that will offend nice people. Avoid coarseness and slang and a low tone. The most sensational news can be told if it is written properly. Thieves' slang and slang of all kinds must not appear in the paper.

2. Keep the paper clean in language and thought. Profane or suggestive words are not necessary. When in doubt, think of a 13-year-old girl reading what you are writing.

3. Handle sex crime, and revolting details of all kinds, so as to offend good taste as little as we may, in the knowledge that many of our readers are pure-minded girls and women and that an intentional appeal to the salacious is indecent journalism.

4. Our course with reference to the crime of lynching is that of opposition and reprobation.

5. You will avoid all that is yellow in journalism, at the same time emulating the enterprise that characterizes the yellow journals.

6. The only place in print for a sordid tale from the underworld is in a novel where it might serve for a setting for something worth while, just as slimy mud produces the fragrant lily. Standing by itself in a newspaper it can serve no good purpose.

7. Crime stories must be written constructively.

8. Newspapers purvey crime news from habit, just as men and women talk scandal from habit, and not because they think it beneficial to the public or demanded by the public, except by the morbidly minded.

9. The newspaper is primarily the handmaiden of history; day by day it records what men say and do; sin, it realizes, does not vanish because unremarked. Society eliminates sin by detecting and denouncing it. Publicity is the greatest agent of restraint. Who would welcome an ostrich journalism which, by sticking its head into the sands would see no evil, hear no evil, and thus pretend to believe that the community could do no evil.

10. The newspaper is a reporter of events. If it is less, it evades its duty. But if it searches out crime, not for the plain record of it, but to enlarge on it, ornament it, envelop it in the gilded robes of romance, and flaunt it day after day before the eyes of the public, then duty has been left behind, and such a newspaper joins with the panderers to crime.

From an authoritative source within the ranks of journalism, *Editor and Publisher*, comes a summary of the question which shows how ridiculous are the attempts to dismiss the matter as a great hullabaloo stirred up by impractical theorists:

Even blasé New York was startled last week when a judge in General Sessions court dismissed the jury and struck the name of the panel from the permanent roll because these twelve men refused to convict a habitual criminal on the evidence of the police. It was the third time that this same procedure has been enacted in the courts of Greater New York in the last few weeks.

Why? is the natural question that comes up in the minds of thinking people. Surely this is a question that needs an answer and certainly it demands that we pause and take stock of public opinion and responsibility for it.

We do not need to go far to find the cause in New York. The morale of the forces of law enforcement and order and government in New York City has been broken by a campaign of vilification and ridicule against established law and its enforcement that

has been carried on by some of the influential members of the press without thought of consequences.

This campaign began in the spirit of partisanship in city politics at a time when the entire nation was facing the after-the-war crime crisis. Some New York newspapers with an eye upon the coming mayoralty campaign, wilfully lied and deceived in an effort to prove that wholesale murders and robberies were a local problem brought about by the inefficiency of the city police department, when it was a national problem with which the forces of law and order were contending in every city and village in the United States.

Murderers and robbers were pictured under glaring headlines as dashing heroes, and the police were pictured as cringing cowards dominated by crooks. Courage was given the criminal element; public confidence in the forces of law and order was broken; and the morale of the individual peace officer was shattered. To-day we are reaping the result of the breaking-down of our entire system of law and protection.

Turning from the first principles of Americanism, based upon respect for the law of the majority, some of the newspapers are glorifying law breaking and evading; the press has devoted itself to holding law, order, justice, its protectors, up to ridicule; it has made the murderer, the highwayman, the bootlegger and the crook its hero and bedfellow.

We have no comment to make upon the activities of those who would modify or strengthen the prohibition and the definition clauses of the Volstead Act, but we do contend that these newspapers in giving encouragement to law-breakers of all classes, and in breaking down public confidence in law and its enforcement, are a menace to the nation.

It is time that the owners and responsible heads of these newspapers, as well as those of like character in other cities, come to a realization of the evil they are doing. The fact that it is now becoming hard to find juries that will convict habitual perpetrators of crimes against society, is not a reflection on the citizenship of New York City, but upon the moulders of public opinion.

And again from the same source:

It is but natural that divorces, murders, suicides and the most sordid of local crimes have a certain local news value. What that value may be is a matter that only the local managing editor can properly judge; it is also possible for a divorce, murder, suicide or other crime to be carried out of the sordid and filthy by its dramatic, romantic and unusual appeal and made news wherever it is told, and literature if properly written. This is not the kind of stories of which journalism ever need be ashamed, but there

certainly can be no admiration or respect on the part of master journalists at any time for the craftsmen who pander to the lowest passions by spreading sex filth all over the front page of a journal accepted as decent and respectable.

We have had an abundance of this kind of journalism in the last few months, in some cases outcasts of society have been made into national characters with the same place of importance in the news columns as the leaders in government, education, religion, business and industry. In Chicago a dissolute woman shot and killed a drunken rubber salesman who was unfaithful to his wife and family—just a drunken killing, but it made a national sensation; a New Yorker of unsavory reputation sues for divorce naming several co-respondents—it has nothing of news value, but by the use of the words "bathroom," "bedroom," and "pink nighties," it is carried to every American fireside from the Atlantic to the Pacific—common filth sold as news.

Last week news was flashed across the country that a New York banker had sued for divorce and that a counter suit had been entered by his wife. Neither party, it was announced, could be located and the lawyers for neither side would talk, but for ten days the story in all its salacious details was played all over the first pages of the metropolitan press and real news of importance to the education and upbuilding of the world has gone on the floor wasted—either because nobody of ability to write it entertainingly had handled it or because the sense of proportion of many editors has been destroyed.

The present wallowing in crimson news is a disgrace to American journalism and the intelligence of the American people. It is creating a new and damaging national impression of the purposes and ideals of the newspaper as an educational and informative institution.

And from another professional journalistic periodical, the *Fourth Estate*:

The effect of newspaper publication of items concerning infractions of law has long been debatable. The best minds agree, however, that while such information constitutes "news," public opinion is so normally set against crime that its portrayal in print, unless deliberately put in seductive guise, is not conducive to development of lawless tendencies.

A strange situation, however, has been brought about by published reports of the innumerable and rapidly increasing violations of the prohibition enforcement laws. The outcome has been, in the opinion of some, to develop an attitude of mind on the part

of the public which tends to do away with reverence and respect for the law.

The only part played in the development of this attitude by the press is the fact that the published reports show the widespread prevalence of the violations of the law, which coincides with the general feeling of tolerance, if not actual sympathy, toward the violators. When sincere men of the writing profession set down their experiences the accounts become all the more convincing.

Arthur B. Reeve, a well known detective story writer, is one of the many who have set down their experiences. Reeve served as foreman of the recent grand jury that investigated cases for trial in the eastern district of New York. He said that fifty per cent of the cases could be traced directly to prohibition. His outstanding impression was the striking difference between that grand jury and the one of two years previous. In the former the great majority of offenses were of a serious nature, and were seriously considered. In the last, they were looked upon with a lenient eye.

Group Judgments as to Crime News

Typical of the expressions of purpose that have crystallized in journalistic codes are the following by widely separated organizations:

From the canons of the American Society of Newspaper Editors:

A newspaper cannot escape conviction of insincerity if while professing high moral purpose it supplies incentives to base conduct, such as are to be found in details of crime and vice, publication of which is not demonstrably for the general good. Lacking authority to enforce its canons, the journalism here represented can but express the hope that deliberate pandering to vicious instincts will encounter effective public disapproval or yield to the influence of a preponderant professional condemnation.

From the admirable code of the Oregon State Editorial Association:

We will keep our writings and our publications free from unrefinement, except so far as we may sincerely believe publication of sordid details to be for the public good.

From the code of the Kansas Editorial Association:

In no case should the reckless daring of the suspect be lionized.

Opinions from Outside Journalism

Criticisms of the press for its exploitation of crime and vice vary in tone from those so temperate and fair as to beget serious thinking on the part of the editor, to those so caustic as to provoke only antagonism. As an example of the former, the following may be chosen. It comes from one experienced both in journalism and in other social activities, Washington Gladden. It assigns to the editor large responsibilities for social betterment.

In collecting and presenting the news of the day, the habit largely prevails of fixing the attention upon the evils of society; of keeping the seamy side of life uppermost, of exploiting crime and vice and scandal.

We are often told that publicity is a cure for social evils, and to a certain extent this is true; but publicity can be made, and, I think often is made, a most effective means of propagating vice and crime.

Of course there are vast differences among newspapers in their ways of presenting the dark side of life; it may be presented in a way that is instructive and monitory, or it may be presented in a way that is suggestive and demoralizing. One of the great mistakes in dealing with it is in making too much of it; giving it a place in the news of the day which is wholly out of proportion to its real importance. I think it is quite possible that the newspaper which avoids salacious and disgusting details, may still, in the disproportionate emphasis which it gives to the facts of vice and crime, encourage its readers to think worse of their fellow men than they ought to think, and may thus strengthen that unsocial tendency of which we are speaking.

Is it not a deplorable fact that anything which tends to discredit one of our fellow men should be regarded as good stuff, while that which tends to remove such discredit, even when it is known to be unjust, is much less likely to find space in the news column? Is it not true that one of the deepest needs of our social life is the need of a kindlier judgment of our neighbors; the need of a disposition to see the good side of everybody; the need of cultivating faith in men, and the habit of saying the best things we truly can about everybody we know? Would not a public opinion suffused with such generosity and good-will give us juster laws, a more stable social order, a more prosperous and peaceful commonwealth? And has not the newspaper a very large responsibility in securing such conditions?

Likening the daily newspaper to a stage, a caustic critic has described the spectacle presented to the audience as follows:

At one end of the stage a man in a mask is blowing open a safe, in the background an embezzling cashier is boarding a train for Mexico, in the middle of the stage two stalwart gentlemen are chloroforming a helpless old woman, to the left a youth is drowning a girl whom he has first dishonored; at front, in the limelight, a drunken man is beating his wife's brains out with a bootjack. All this movement of life, so varied, so striking, so engrossing, can be seen for one cent and put before the eyes of children without taking them into the street.

Or, as another authority on crime puts it, "Debauchery of the public press in sensational portrayal of murder cases, divorce suits, etc., for pecuniary gain, is little short of criminal."

And from another authoritative source:

The yellow journal is a positive agent for vice and crime. The condition of morality, as well as of mental life, in a community depends on the newspapers. A people is profoundly influenced by whatever is persistently brought to its attention. Any article of commerce—a food, luxury, a medicine, or a stimulant—can always be sold in immense quantities if it can be persistently and largely advertised. In the same way, advertising crime, vice, and vulgarity, on a scale unheard of before in the annals of history, has the same effect—it increases crime, vice and vulgarity enormously.

Or a pungent paragraph like the following:

Our press is fast becoming no more than an open sewer contaminating our very atmosphere with its exposure of putrid "news" which should be allowed to flow underground to the sea of quick oblivion. For crime is not made odious by constant exposure, but it is made to appear common; and what seems common is bound to be regarded with little aversion, or even welcomed as a solution of a difficulty.

Quantity of Crime News

It is natural that a student of the subject should make measurements of the actual amount of crime news printed in newspapers of different types, but the figures are not highly significant. Quality means immeasurably more than quantity.

Sometimes, indeed, statistics show that a larger percentage,

as well as a larger number of columns, of such news appears in a relatively conservative paper than in a paper of the sensational type. And the measurements show great variations in the same paper from day to day. This, of course, is inevitable so long as crime varies in amount and in news interest from day to day.

A recently compiled table covering a representative list of newspapers for a month shows an average of about four columns of crime news out of an average of ninety columns of news—excluding editorial and advertising—or a percentage of 4.4. The lowest amount for any one paper on any one day was 1.6 columns, and the highest amount, 6.2 columns. Obviously no crime wave nor sensational murder trial obtruded itself into this table. Every newspaper reader notices that some days when he picks up his paper he finds every top-head story on the front page dealing with human catastrophe or maladjustment, while the next week he may remark the total absence of such news.

One investigator who compared papers in 1881 and in 1893 concluded that the amount of "gossip" increased in that period but the space devoted to crime and criminals had increased in only one New York paper. Another study of 240 newspapers in 1910 revealed that news of crime and vice occupied 3.1 per cent of the whole space, with fluctuations from nothing to 19.8 per cent. Still another investigation of about the same date resulted in the pronouncement that of the reading matter in newspapers, 22.8 per cent was demoralizing, 16.8 per cent unwholesome, 21.2 per cent trivial, and 39.2 per cent worth while.

Statistics on the different kinds of negative news, murder, divorce, suicide, gambling, fraud, burglary, blackmail, vice, etc., are, for the most part, void of consistency or meaning.

The fact that any given newspaper published more crime news, or less, in 1923 than it did in 1893 is also almost meaningless because the difference may be due to many things besides the policies followed by the paper.

So the value of figures in this field must be discounted. The only thing they tell us that is worth remembering is that, in

general, less crime news is published to-day than was published twenty years ago, or five years ago, for that matter. To go farther back of that, with quantitative measurements, is useless because of the uncertain differential that more distant times require.

The essence of the problem is qualitative. If too much crime news is being published for the public good, the trouble at bottom is that the wrong kind of news is printed. Lessening of the quantity alone would not greatly help matters. Indeed, it is conceivable that the quantity might even be increased with benefit, if the news printed were of the right kind rightly handled.

A Comparative Study

The methods used in reporting crime are no different, of course, from those used in other fields. But a student of the subject will derive profit from a comparison of the news of the same incident as presented in different papers. If he is not quite clear as to the characteristics of a sensationally written story as compared with a conservative one, he will find such comparative study illuminating. Diction and style, he will find, have quite as much to do with the effect as choice of materials. Primarily the question underneath all the discussion in this chapter is one of what may, and what may not, with propriety be put into a newspaper, but involved with it at every step, whether explicitly mentioned or not, is the question of manner. Content and form cannot be separated.

Facetiousness in a report of a crime is extremely dangerous. It can hardly be so guarded as not to seem to make light of the offense, to present it as a conventional matter. Particularly in the frivolous handling of domestic unpleasantness, perhaps accompanied by violence, the newspaper humorist, including the cartoonist, has much to answer for.

The Road to Improvement

An interesting diversity is noticeable in the more or less plausible recommendations made for the betterment of newspapers in respect to practices discussed in this chapter.

A "Mental Health" Board

A psychologist, speaking before a society of medical jurisprudence, advocated the establishment by law or custom of a "Board of Psychology" to exclude from newspapers such reports of crime and vice as would not, in their judgment, prove deterrent in their effect.

The practical difficulties of such a plan seem to exclude it from serious consideration.

Penalties by Law

Efforts have been made to set up legal control. Usually, though not always, they have failed of enactment.

The general question of legal restrictions is examined in a later chapter. Here it is necessary only to venture the opinion that the most promising opportunities for experiment in the exertion of influence by law towards betterment of journalism are in this field of the news of crime and vice.

Disapproval by the Public

In one direction the corrective function of public disapproval is as actively exercised as need be desired, namely, in the direction of criticism. In the other direction, calling for withdrawal of patronage from the offending journal and the support of a better one, conditions are not so healthful. To utter criticism requires less self-control than to refrain from buying a sensational newspaper. The public would rather recommend restraint to the editor than practice it. Nevertheless there seems to be a growing number of people who appreciate that the drawing of the issue between decency and license in journalism drafts on one side or the other every purchaser of newspapers and every advertiser.

Individuals and groups, however, who express themselves only when goaded by the impulse to censure, may be admonished to be diligent also in commendation when opportunity is afforded. If they require the journalist to discern the good as well as to expose the evil, they should set him a good example. Nor should they wait until they can find an altogether

perfect newspaper. Even the merest flash of ideality deserves recognition.

So much for the influences of melioration outside of the profession of journalism itself. Within the profession, the most potent force is that of leadership by journalists having a clear vision of their responsibilities. The words and the acts of such individuals gain, in time, the sanction of the group in the form of codes of ethics or canons. As these codes gain in potency and prestige the desire for enforcement may be expected to bring into being such agencies—practice committees or state boards—as may promise the best results.

More Careful Practice by Journalists

There are more than a few editors who are maintaining a policy in line with the standard recommended by one of the most prominent:

If I could write a code for all the newspapers of America, I would ban everything of a vicious character except that which is necessary as a public warning. If I ran a newspaper to suit my own ideals, there would not be a police reporter on the staff.

And as another puts it:

The world is not such a bad place after all if we are given a chance to reflect on some of the good things that are occurring daily. It is stressing the hideous and the morbid that tends to make us cynics and misanthropes.

In similar vein is the declaration of a publisher who, after thirty years' experience as reporter on a metropolitan daily, acquired a newspaper of his own and turned his back on much of the practice that had been familiar to him. His success has proved that profits are not inconsistent with decency. He does not suppress the news of evil, but he gives the headlines to the good:

Instead of playing up misdemeanors, crime, scandal and other forms of unpleasantness, my idea is to centralize on the wholesome and the upbuilding, the substance of life rather than the fleeting shadows, to specialize on such things as civic virtue and civic pride, community betterment, public improvements, the problems of

the farmer, diversification and coöperation, to iterate and reiterate the splendid advantages we possess in our climate and soil, the importance of better roads and to support in every way the activities of churches and schools, to boost and not knock, and above all to be clean.

The optimism of one city publisher is expressed thus:

Our paper is fifty years old. In its earlier years, the front page was devoted almost exclusively to stories of exciting nature, war news, accidents, duels, crimes. Many happenings were reported which we would not consider fit to print to-day. Any one who looks back in the files of an American newspaper will find that there is less sensationalism to-day. We use big headlines but our paper does not devote the space to gruesome stories that it did in an earlier day. We do not report ordinary police court cases. We do not handle accusations of crime unless they come through the courts or their truth is evident.

The following dispatch from a city in Texas was recently sent out by a press association:

As a concession to the spirit of "peace on earth and good will toward men" some of the larger newspapers of the state have voluntarily agreed to move all news of crime off their first pages in the holiday season. In one of the larger of to-day's newspapers the crime news was moved over to the sixteenth page.

There is nothing radical about the idea. It has interest as a partial recognition of an important principle. Consistency would perhaps have relegated some of the "news" to the page after the last.

A quotation from an editorial in a great American newspaper, which in its fine career of more than a century has exemplified much of the ideal in journalism, the *New York Evening Post*, may well close this chapter:

The cub reporter's first assignment on a daily of the future, let us hope, will no longer be an explosion in an ash can, or a talk with the manager of an actress who has lost a pearl necklace; he will instead, perhaps, be assigned to an interview with the professor who has evolved a new theory for the reduction of juvenile criminality, or the president of the society for the development of communal housekeeping. Headlines of the future may be: "Last

Windowless Room Disappears with Tearing Down of East Side Tenement," or "Infant Mortality Cut in Half." Here would be room enough for fine writing and picturesque adjective and "human interest stuff." Not merely the sensational or accidental need monopolize the gifted reporter's pen. The events that touch the real life and future of the race may ask for the exercise of quite as much art, with the added advantage that they are of lasting significance in the upward march.

CHAPTER VIII

SOME BUSINESS-ETHICAL PROBLEMS

With the type of business problem which has only a minimum of ethical significance and with the problem which concerns the public very little, an inquiry like the present has nothing to do. How to establish a base rate for advertising; whether to use a sliding scale of rates or a flat rate; how best to gain subscriptions—these and a hundred like questions that crowd into the publisher's day may be classified as purely business matters. But there are problems of a different character which resemble closely those in the editorial departments. First let us consider some that arise in connection with advertising.

Excluding Offensive Advertising

Among the notable changes in the advertising policies of newspapers, which have taken place in less than a generation, is the change of practice in regard to unpleasant or disgusting advertising. It does not matter whether it be the subject of the advertisement or its illustration or its wording that is in danger of giving offence, it can not gain access to any but the more careless of the smaller publications. Such are the advertisements of cures for loathsome diseases, for books of a prurient nature, for marriage agencies, etc.

Before it was prohibited by law, the advertising of whisky and other intoxicants was classed as advertising offensive to large numbers of people. Tobacco advertising is in somewhat the same position to-day. Many of the larger farm papers exclude it entirely, thereby foregoing a revenue as high as \$50,000 annually for one publication. But the policy is not so much one of conscience as one of business prudence. Publishers and careful advertisers have reached the conclusion

that any advertisement which offends readers lessens their responsiveness to all advertising and lowers the value of the medium. Maintenance of the prestige and "pulling power" of a newspaper is a primary concern of the publisher.

When the question of decency arises in regard to local advertising, it is usually the advertising of a moving picture film or a traveling entertainment of some sort. Film advertising has often been as disgusting as could well be imagined and constitutes one phase of the problem of the moving pictures. The question as to whether a newspaper can consistently advertise a play while, at the same time, denouncing it editorially raises a nice point. It is the question as to whether the editor is sure enough of his opinions to feel justified in assuming the rôle of public censor in addition to that of editorial critic.

Refusing Dishonest or Untruthful Advertising

The history of advertising contains many chapters devoted to frauds. The same is true of any accurate history of business. Advertising was on a low level because business was on a low level. Its ideals have improved with those of business, though in the last decade it has made independent effort towards improvement in standards.

A large majority of the present generation of publishers deem it necessary to satisfy themselves that an oil stock or a mining stock or a land investment project is not a swindle before they will advertise it. Their predecessors were not so particular. The modern publisher scrutinizes even his local advertising. He likes to know that a fire sale is genuine and that bargain claims bear some resemblance to truth.

With respect to patent medicine advertising and the advertisements of quack doctors, the metropolitan press is usually very careful; the country press less so. Some large newspapers will not accept advertising of medicines taken internally—on the theory that they belong to a discredited class even if they are not themselves fraudulent.

In thus undertaking to protect the public, newspapers have been assisted, and sometimes led, by the movement, at first national and now international, for truth in advertising. The

movement, fostered by the Advertising Clubs of the World, with "Truth in advertising" for their motto, has gained results in the form of honest advertising laws in a large majority of the states, Better Business Bureaus in about forty large cities, and a national Vigilance Committee with many local branches, spending vast sums annually in detecting and prosecuting fraudulent advertisers.

A section of the "model statute" against untruthful advertising holds the publisher liable along with the offending advertiser. The educational influence of this provision in quickening the publisher's sense of responsibility has doubtless been large.

Conditions are still far from perfect. Impossible cures and impossible bargains are still offered through the columns of newspapers, but decency and self-interest are winning their fight, if it is safe to judge by a curve plotted on the high points in the history of advertising during the last fifty years.

Guaranteed Advertising

Practically all newspaper publishers declare that their advertising is guaranteed, in the sense that, to the best of their knowledge and belief, it is truthful. Few of them, however, publish any specific statement to that effect. Still fewer specifically guarantee to protect the purchaser of any article advertised to the extent of insuring return of his money if the purchase is not satisfactory in respect to the statements in the advertisement.

The general reluctance of publishers to assume direct financial liability in such cases is due largely to the fact they do not have time nor facilities to make investigation of statements in the advertising copy submitted to them by merchants. Such censorship, too, is irritating to most business concerns, and the publisher, especially the publisher of the small newspaper, finds it impractical to undertake it.

The pioneer in this field was the New York *Tribune* which, more than a decade ago, announced its policy of guaranteeing all its advertising. The *Tribune's* guaranty reads:

You can purchase merchandise advertised in the *Tribune* with absolute safety, for if dissatisfaction results in any case the *Tribune* guarantees to pay your money back upon request. No red tape. No quibbling. We make good promptly if the advertiser does not.

Some years later a similar policy was adopted in England by the London *Daily Mail* and the *Evening News*. The guaranty in this case was qualified slightly:

Should any reader be dissatisfied with goods purchased as the result of advertisements in the paper, the *Daily Mail* will promptly refund the whole of the money paid for them, if it is shown upon investigation that the goods were not truthfully described in the advertisement and do not represent fair value for the money paid for them.

In the case of the *Tribune*, the machinery for rendering the policy practical included a "Bureau of Investigations," and an "Ad-Visor Department" in the newspaper itself. The expense involved in administration was considerable; damage suits by some aggrieved advertisers were incurred; but after several years' trial the plan was endorsed as generally satisfactory to all concerned. It has had a considerable influence on the advertising methods of other newspapers, large and small, some of which have inaugurated similar policies.

Quantity and Proportion of Advertising

The rights of the reader are to some degree involved in the amount of space devoted to advertising if this is allowed to affect the quantity of news published. In large newspapers carefully made up, such is not the case. An absolute minimum of news is always maintained. In the larger papers it runs from fifty to a hundred columns. If the volume of advertising is large, more pages are added according to a fixed schedule. The average ratio of news to advertising in 144 evening papers measured for *Editor and Publisher* in June, 1923, was thirty-seven to sixty-three. The maximum percentage of news was eighty-eight and the minimum, thirty-three. The practice of making quick variations in size cannot so easily be followed by the smaller paper, the mechanical equip-

ment of which does not admit of great flexibility as to number of pages. In its case the exclusion of advertising becomes at times a matter of fairness to the reader.

Some progressive publishers, however, have gone a step further in raising the question as to the propriety of indefinite increase in the size of newspapers. And not such bulky papers burdensome to the reader? And since they result from the acceptance of very large advertisements, do they not indicate a situation in which a small group of advertisers control a major portion of the paper's revenue, and therefore threaten the paper's independence? Are they not largely responsible for the growing tendency to regard newspapers as mere commercial undertakings?

Affirmative answers to these and similar questions bring up the further problem—and a most difficult one—as to the remedy. Possibly the state of the paper market in the not distant future will compel action. Increase in rates in order to reduce volume of advertising, without loss in revenue, is the measure usually advocated.

Protecting Local Advertisers

A favorite policy of the small publisher is to refuse to print advertising of mail-order houses, as a measure of protection for local merchants. The principle involved is that of loyalty to the group having common interests. As to the interests of the larger group composed of the paper's readers, the publisher usually feels that they are not really at stake; that the consumer who buys goods by mail to the detriment of the business of his community is really pursuing a policy unfavorable to his own interests.

Similarly, newspapers in small towns usually refuse to publish advertising from near-by larger towns and from cities. Occasionally a publisher asserts independence in this matter declaring that he does not feel justified in withholding from his readers the news of the larger markets. So far as the question has ethical content it seems to call for an answer favoring the broader policy. But practical business considerations may seem to argue strongly the other way.

"Coöperation" with Advertisers

The theory of "coöperation" is that if a commodity is good enough to be advertised by a newspaper it is good enough to be the subject of descriptive articles designed to educate the reader in its use. Home fire extinguishers, hog feeders, milk aerators, rubber gloves, lightning rods, fire pots, electric alarms,—any of these might be the proper subject for an article. The fact, then, that an advertiser of one of the commodities requests that an article be published in "coöperation" should not raise any issue of propriety. Such is the argument, and it carries much weight, especially in agricultural or other class papers.

The only problem is to find the place at which to draw the line. There is such a thing as laying siege to the reader in an overzealous manner. There is such a thing as filling too much space with these purposeful articles, however interesting and practical.

A form of coöperation much more questionable is that in which the newspaper fills its show windows with brands of merchandise being advertised in its columns. Any proceeding that emphasizes in the mind of the public the commercial side of journalism and obscures the professional side is to be deprecated without qualification.

A useful and legitimate form of coöperation, developed to large proportions by some newspapers, is the survey of the paper's territory in order to determine the possible market for certain commodities. The number of stores of different sorts, the buying ability of each economic class, the competitive situation with respect to any given article, the ability of the paper to create sales in the special case under investigation—all such matters are studied by trained investigators of the bureau and a decision given which often eliminates the paper from consideration by the advertiser. This service the paper performs, not from any ethical prompting, but on the cold business principle that its prosperity will be greater if it avoids having any dissatisfied advertisers—refuses the business of any but such as are sure to get satisfactory results from their advertising expenditure.

Free Advertising

If free advertising appears as advertising, the question involved is merely one as to the publisher's disposition towards philanthropy. But free advertising is usually printed as news. This brings the readers into the problem. Generally speaking, their interests are not in harmony with those of the myriad seekers for free publicity.

Clubbing the Advertiser

A newspaper which has a monopoly of an advertising field or dominates it, is subject to a strong temptation to exact that measure of advertising patronage to which it feels entitled, always, of course, justifying its demands on the ground that the business interests involved need the publicity. A paper which yields to this temptation is sometimes guilty of using methods which are described as "clubbing." One is blacklisting in the news department, another is unfair discrimination as to rates, still another is zealous "boosting" of competing concerns. All are inconsistent with high business standards.

A closely related practice is the granting of exclusive advertising contracts, for which a high rate is obtained. The unfairness of the practice condemns it. A safe rule is to give no advertiser a contract which will not be duplicated for any other advertiser.

Fair Advertising Rates

An ethical question is raised when a newspaper takes advantage of a political situation to charge exorbitant rates for political advertising; or when it lowers its rates in some locality to a point below cost in order to destroy a competing local paper; or when it gives discriminatory discounts.

Exceptional cases that raise questions of ethics are:

1. When, through a printer's error, a price in an advertisement is quoted too low, it is a theory of some that the advertiser should sell the article at the price advertised and that the newspaper should make up the loss.

This seems hardly fair unless gross carelessness or failure

to follow instructions regarding proof, etc., is shown. The public is hardly entitled to buy \$625 pianos for \$6.25 as advertised at one time by the *Toronto World*.

2. When an advertiser seeks to use his regular space to attack the policies of the paper in local matters, the question as to just what it is that advertisers purchase from the newspaper becomes acute.

The *Detroit News* told such an advertiser, "You can say anything once in the news columns, but your advertising space was purchased for business announcements only." He cancelled his regular advertising contract—temporarily.

3. Rain insurance was taken out by one newspaper to protect it against the loss that would be entailed in repeating a number of real estate promotion advertisements should rain on the day of the opening render the advertising ineffective.

The insurance feature in itself was a harmless publicity "stunt" but the engagement made by the paper to re-run the advertising in case of rain was decidedly unfair to other advertisers who were in much the same position but enjoyed no such guaranty.

4. Front page position held by some advertiser for a long period renders it difficult sometimes to adopt the modern policy of exclusion.

5. The sort of blunder that seems worse than a crime is the failure of an advertising medium to carry intelligent advertising of its own services—or to carry no self-advertising at all.

Problems in the Circulation Department

The public is affected, of course, by the subscription price of its newspapers; but there is no sure basis on which to rest a judgment as to whether that price is right or wrong. How much is a newspaper worth to a family? What proportion of the cost of a newspaper should the subscriber pay? What is a fair profit for a publisher to make? These questions can not be answered dogmatically. In too many instances the publisher has been content with far too little return for his labor. He has sold his weekly paper for one dollar a year and his country daily paper for two dollars a year and his advertising space for ten cents an inch or less. He has eked

out an existence, sacrificed any possible business standing in the community, and waived the prestige a newspaper must have to lend weight to its words. Sometimes senseless competition has been responsible for his failure. Sometimes business incompetence. The consequences being what they are, such failure seems almost reprehensible.

Subscription Contests

The cost in self-respect and dignity and the usual accompaniment of bad feeling are of so serious a nature as to place the subscription contest—beauty, popularity, or what not—in a doubtful light. It is under grave suspicion of not being a legitimate newspaper enterprise.

Premiums

Generally speaking, a premium offer is a device that cheapens a newspaper and does little to bring substantial growth. But it can hardly be regarded as ethically bad.

Honest Circulation Statements

The dark age of the circulation liar has passed. Instead we find the larger newspaper going to great trouble and expense to make not only carefully audited statements of circulation as regards quantity, but also careful analyses of circulation showing "density" or "coverage" in its territory and character or quality in respect to its classes of readers. These facts are no more than fair to the advertiser who buys, not space merely, but potential interest and buying ability on the part of readers of the paper. Misrepresentation of circulation to purchasers of advertising space is, in some states, a misdemeanor.

Smaller newspapers have felt the influence of this movement; indeed, some of them were pioneers in it. They have, in some states, set up a central office with a paid secretary one of whose duties is to issue lists of newspapers within the state containing accurate circulation figures.

The use of sensational methods to sell newspapers, especially Sunday issues; imitation of successful methods of competitors; pursuit of class circulation rather than general circula-

tion—these and other similar topics are of minor interest from the point of view of the public. Matters covered by postal regulations, such as arrearages of subscribers, may be regarded as satisfactorily taken care of, for the present, at least.

Salaries Paid to Reporters

This matter involves a business problem that affects the character of the paper and its service to the public. Reporters, uneducated and inexperienced, can be obtained anywhere for small salaries. Most newspapers employ them willingly. In so doing they entrust to unfit hands many private and public interests and, to some degree, the prestige of the paper. It is a short-sighted policy—not even one of enlightened self-interest. When newspaper offices were the only training grounds for reporters, the situation was different from that to-day with more than two hundred colleges teaching journalism—and those that do not teach journalism turning out educated men and women many of whom would be attracted to newspaper work were it not known to be so woefully underpaid.

The Ideal of Usefulness or of Dominance

Since every man tends to live according to his privately constructed or personally adopted hierarchy of values, it is particularly fortunate when journalism attracts a man with a broad social consciousness.

As to dominance, Jason Rogers has said:

The price of dominance in the newspaper business is greater than most mortals have ability or inclination to pay. In many cases its attainment has left badly shattered men prematurely old to enjoy the fruits of the conflict for power and money. In others of the more sane type of construction we see old men or the offspring of founders floundering on to less influential status.

But usefulness, even a large measure of usefulness, exacts no such penalty.

PART II

THE THING WE CALL JOURNALISM

CHAPTER IX

THE NATURE AND FUNCTIONS OF JOURNALISM

A watchmaker needs to be a skilled artisan, but not necessarily a thoughtful man. He can make good watches without ever having speculated as to the human values of his product. He need not have stopped to consider how watches promote order in the world, establishing a dividing line between those who get to their appointments promptly and those who make excuses, and stirring up a considerable volume of insistence that meals be on time and trains run on schedule. The watchmaker, as a watchmaker, is concerned only with the technique of his craft, with the careful coaching of a handful of wheels, springs, and such miscellany, in the pretty art of revealing the progress of the earth's turn-over. When his watch and the rest of the universe seem to be going along harmoniously together, his work is done.

So with the maker of bathtubs, or automobiles, or tooth paste, or what not, social values lie beyond the limits of his immediate interests. He must understand the human need that he undertakes to satisfy and must master the processes in providing that satisfaction; but he need not work out a "philosophy" of his vocation, if he is one who prefers the close-fitting style of mental horizon.

But it is different with the makers of newspapers—as almost everybody knows except the makers of newspapers. And some of them know it. Some of them realize that journalism constitutes so large a factor in social and political well-being that society has acquired, through its dependence coupled with its rights of self-preservation, a proprietary interest in newspapers. Some of them know that journalism bears heavy responsibilities of a professional character. But other publishers and editors profess to be engaged merely in the manu-

facture of a commodity. They take pride in their mastery of the processes of production. They study their market. They are expert caterers to public taste. They can prescribe the right change of diet for a profit and loss statement that is under weight. All the ills to which the publishing business is heir they can diagnose correctly, and they can prescribe the remedy or perform the operation indicated. But as to what it all means they are not curious. As to the propriety of practising journalism on the level of the pill-peddling doctor or the fee-grabbing lawyer, rather than on the higher levels of the professions, they have no concern.

It was unusual enough to be printed as news that, "A little group of men in the editorial department of the *Baltimore Sun* has begun a study of newspaper problems. They meet to discuss such matters as, 'What is the social function of the newspaper?' 'How do we gauge the public interest in news?' 'How should crime, accident and scandal be handled?' 'The problem of propaganda from without,' and a score of other like subjects."

Why should not little groups of men in all newspaper offices discuss the same questions? Whenever two or three who make their living by the practice of journalism have an hour of leisure together, why doesn't the talk turn on criticisms of the newspapers and the answers thereto? When larger groups assemble, why do they usually discuss everything except questions of journalistic practice? The answer, of course, is obvious. They are mainly interested in less elusive things, such as profits, wages, the technique of their work, the commonplaces of the day's grind.

Notwithstanding all this, however, there is evidence that a deal of thinking along broader lines is going on in the journalistic mind. The "cases"—most of them supplied by practising journalists—that constitute a considerable part of this book may be offered as a supporting "exhibit." The codes of practice formulated by editorial groups, by individual newspapers, and by journalists here and there, present further evidence.

In more than two hundred colleges in the United States, little groups of students are talking about these things among

themselves and with their teachers of journalism. The news-writing classes in hundreds of high schools take up such questions incidentally. The public at large is interested as never before in its newspapers and its rights of criticism and control. It thinks much, talks much, and writes much about journalistic standards and practices.

And this ferment means something. Some dare to think it means that journalism is in a fair way to become actively rather than potentially a profession, if not on its own motion, then on the motion of the party of the second part, the public, which is finding that it needs a more serviceable type of journalism than the manufacturers of newspapers as a commodity are giving it.

Most beginners in journalism, whether in newspaper offices or in colleges and universities, undervalue the importance of other things than skill. Scoring a beat is to them the *summum bonum*. By what means it was done is no matter. A bit of cheap but flashy enterprise bulks larger for them than a steady policy of public service. Even in matters of style and form, of routine in the regular day's work, the ideas of the beginner are usually limited to what he has learned from two or three of the more experienced; and as he begins to form opinions on matters of practice, standards of right and wrong, professional conduct, he is hedged about in the same way. There is no place to which he can go to find out easily the variations in newspaper practice, the reasons why good practice is good and bad practice is bad. His ideals rise to the level, perhaps, of the ideals of those with whom he works. He absorbs the "traditions" of the office, or of the class room. He has little opportunity to compare and sort out and measure for himself the notions of editors and publishers, apologists and eulogists and critics, who see the same things but from different angles.

It is well, then, that the fundamental question as to the nature and functions of the thing we call journalism be rather carefully examined.

A newspaper is a business concern—but it is more than that. How much more? Why?

A newspaper bears some resemblance to a public utility—but it is essentially different. Why must it be regarded as being different?

Journalism is a profession, or ought to be—but it falls short in certain important respects. How much short? Why? And what can be done about it?

Is it true that journalism is less professional than formerly; that formerly the editor was paid for his services as a leader, but that now he is paid for a commodity—his professional services, if any, to be rendered gratuitously?

Having in Part I of this book considered particulars of newspaper practice, we may approach the more general questions pertaining to journalism as a whole.

The Newspaper Publishing Business

As an approach to the consideration of journalism as a profession, it is well to appreciate the nature and magnitude of the business of newspaper publishing, for it is obvious that in journalism we find a different situation from that in medicine or law or teaching or the ministry. None of these professions is sustained by a manufacturing industry engaged in producing a commodity and selling it to the public, as the publishing industry is engaged in manufacturing and selling newspapers. None of them is directly dependent on a trade or art, as the publishing industry is dependent on the art or trade of printing. In their beginnings these professions were essentially the same as they are to-day. They were forms of personal service answering human needs. Newspaper publishing, on the other hand, in its beginnings was essentially unlike modern journalism. It was not really journalism at all. Much newspaper publishing to-day is not journalism—good journalism. But a growing number of thoughtful people in the last two or three generations have seen the opportunity for a kind of public service by newspaper men and women that would merit being described as professional, and a growing number of newspaper men and women have had the same view of their work and have exemplified it in their careers—as journalists.

Statistics of the Business

The newspaper publishing industry in the United States, according to census statistics for the year 1919, comprised about seventeen thousand establishments. Daily papers were issued from 2424 of these, weeklies from 13,375, and semi-weeklies, tri-weeklies, and Sunday papers from the remainder of the list.

The circulation of the morning newspapers was slightly above ten million copies a day, and of the evening papers a little less than twice that much. The total number of newspapers sold each day was thirty-three million, an increase during the decade of thirty-six per cent. The circulation of Sunday papers showed the greatest growth, from thirteen to nineteen million net paid circulation, an increase of approximately forty-six per cent.

The volume of business in 1919 was \$566,321,000, of which thirty-four per cent represented income from circulation and sixty-six per cent, from advertising. The ratio of receipts from circulation to those from advertising increased slightly during the decade.

Executives and employees engaged in the newspaper business numbered about 160,000.

A considerable number of newspapers are valued at more than one million dollars, a few at ten times that much, a large number at more than one hundred thousand dollars. Daily papers in towns of ten thousand inhabitants are often sold for more than ten thousand dollars.

One owner of a "string" of newspapers estimates his income at one hundred million dollars a year, and his profits at a million a month. Another string does an annual business of twenty-five million dollars. A single newspaper in New York City has given its volume of business as twenty million dollars a year.

These statistics are too large to mean much, because they cannot be visualized, but they supply a background for the consideration of journalism as a profession and for the analysis of such a phrase, for example, as "the capitalistic press."

Differences in Point of View

The editor who declares, as many do, "I am not a journalist; I am just a plain, plug newspaper man," may be telling the truth, but he makes a peculiar choice of something to boast about. Unwittingly, perhaps, he takes the position of a scoffer at something which the most ordinary intelligence should recognize as being fine in its ideals, whether realizable or not.

To be sure, a man has a right to prefer being called a lawyer rather than an attorney, or a doctor rather than a physician, or a preacher rather than a minister, or a newspaper man rather than a journalist. When it is a mere matter of terms, there is no occasion for a quarrel. Splitting hairs is non-productive labor. But the significance of the debate over the name, "journalism," lies deeper than the mere term itself. It is a controversy over an ideal. The drawing of the line between a business and a profession is not easy, but only a silly sophistry maintains that therefore there is no practical distinction. Who can tell exactly when night ends and day begins?

True, it is not difficult to find the professional spirit exemplified in business pursuits as well as to find a purely business concept of the professions. No importance attaches to an arbitrary demarcation between the two. Perhaps most lines of business have their professional aspects. But the weight of the distinction lies in the recognition of what is implied by the term, "professional," without regard to where it may justly be used. The question as to whether it may properly be applied to journalism, now or in the future, is a question of life or death for an ideal vastly important to society.

The newspaper publisher who says, as many of them do, "My newspaper is a business institution pure and simple; I am nothing more than the manufacturer of a commodity for public consumption," may be telling the truth as to his own case; but the one who says, "Journalism is nothing more than a business," is clearly out of his depth. His pride in being a realist betrays him into a generalization that is absurd.

Many estimable editors who disclaim being journalists do so

because they feel that the word is pretentious, that it is cant, that it cloaks hypocrisy. Their preference for sincerity rather than pose is commendable, but their unwillingness to admit any responsibilities beyond those common to business in general is, to say the least, excessively modest. In too many cases it suggests slackness as regards a plain duty—the same sort of obtuseness that is seen when a lawyer denies any obligations as an officer of the court, or a doctor neglects observance of quarantine measures, or a minister confines his services to the reading of two pleasant essays on Sunday. Unfortunately not all of those who hold formal membership in the professions are genuinely professional.

Nothing in the foregoing is meant to deny a measure of usefulness to the efficient "newspaper man," or the man engaged in the "business of publishing"; but he seems to be willfully blind to his opportunities, and in so far as he disregards proper standards, he is a liability to journalism.

Jason Rogers declares:

The saddest incident coming to one's observation, is to see newspapers all over the country pass into the control of adventurers in journalism for purely commercial purposes, newspapers bought like so many horses, pigs or cows, and operated for mere money-making by men no nearer to the proportions of journalists than are the traders of Baxter street. . . . The newspaper business is not yet down to the level of the five and ten-cent stores run by clerks, and yet that is what purely commercial interests are trying to make of it. In our big cities it is next to impossible to secure direct contact with the real men behind a newspaper. Employes with no broad conception of affairs too often speak for our newspapers.

Professional journalism begins where the business of publishing leaves off.

The Dim Beginnings

It was not until a century and a half after the introduction of printing into England that the first newspaper appeared. During that time some three hundred books had been published. It was not until a half century after the introduction of print-

ing into America that the first newspaper appeared, and during that period many books had been published. In both countries the newspaper came as only a slight variation from what had gone before. It was different from the books in having a content slightly more timely; it was different from the pamphlets in having periodicity and a continuity of name and in conveying news rather than opinion. But nothing distinctively new was born into the world with the *Weekly News* or *Publick Occurrences* or the *Boston News Letter*. They were the beginnings of journalism hardly more than the invention of printing was the beginning of journalism. The professional characteristics of newspaper publishing and editing developed much later. The steps in this development are difficult to trace; indeed they have not been satisfactorily described. It is not essential to our purpose that an attempt be made to set them down here. Our only concern is in the appreciation of the fact that journalism to-day is something different in quality from the business of publishing newspapers yesterday—or to-day—and must be regarded as apart from that business; and that there is reasonable hope that, having evolved thus far, it may develop further until such professional attributes as it now lacks shall be added to it and it shall become as distinct from the business of publishing as that business is from the trade of printing.

The Newspaper as a Public Utility

At its best a newspaper is an instrument through which a journalist or a group of journalists work out their professional responsibilities to the public. But before considering it from this point of view it is desirable to take note of the interesting suggestion that a newspaper, apart from its function as a medium of professional service, has many of the characteristics of a public utility, a suggestion that gave rise to much profitable discussion.

Public utilities supply the people with necessities and conveniences such as light and water and transportation. The newspaper supplies them with a no less essential "commodity," news. How essential this "raw material of public opinion"

is to the community and the nation is easily appreciated when one imagines a world without newspapers.

How essential a newspaper may be to the individual reader is suggested by the following item:

It appears that through some fault in the routing of the mail, an out-of-town subscriber failed to receive several issues of the Fort Worth *Star-Telegram*. The circulation department took up the matter as soon as it was brought to its attention, but before it had been straightened out the subscriber filed a suit for damages amounting to \$19.50.

In his complaint he fixed the value of each copy at \$1.65 or at the rate of \$592.25 a year. He claimed he had suffered great mental anguish through failing to receive the *Star-Telegram* for fourteen days, and the only thing that would restore his peace of mind would be an award of \$19.50 damages.

The publisher naturally regarded \$592.25 as a rather high valuation to place upon a year's subscription to the *Star-Telegram*.

But from whatever angle the subject is viewed the publisher of the Fort Worth *Star-Telegram* ought to feel highly complimented. While \$592.25 seems like an excessive valuation to be placed on the yearly issue of any newspaper by one of its subscribers yet that amount is not at all unusual. A single issue sometimes contains information that is worth many times \$592.25 to a manufacturer, a retailer or an inventor, who reads it.

A newspaper supplies the people with a convenience, if not a necessity, in the form of information about merchandise; and affords merchants and others an approach to the minds of the buyers of commodities and services. Whether or not it will ever be illegal for a newspaper to refuse to carry a reputable advertisement, as it is illegal for a railway to refuse to carry a passenger who has a ticket and is fit to associate with others, the fact remains that morally the obligation is as strong in one case as the other. They are both "common carriers." Of course, considerable latitude is afforded the newspaper in its interpretation of the word reputable.

A newspaper does not use the streets as does a street railway, but it uses the mails and it exercises the right to convey into the homes matter which may have the beneficent effects of good light and pure water or the evil consequences of poor light and infected water.

From a Lawyer's Point of View

An attorney-general of Missouri, J. W. Barrett, speaking before an editorial association, expressed a not uncommon view as to the public utility character of the press:

You are the chief medium of communication between the people and their official representatives. The people themselves do not come to the seat of government, and do not witness the work of their agents in public offices. They must know whether they are being served or despoiled, but they cannot know except through your reports. Accurate, fair-minded journalism is therefore indispensable to intelligent and effective self-government. You hold in sacred trust for the body politic its functions of sight and speech and a breach of that trust is treason.

Once we regarded railroads as private corporations. Then public opinion awoke to the fact that railroads are altogether of a public nature; that they are the arteries through which flows the nation's commerce and that they must be conducted for the benefit of all citizens alike.

So too we used to believe newspapers were private possessions and that the editor could use his news columns just as he desired. A few years ago, in fact, every newspaper was devoted to battling for some particular cause and its readers who were supporters of that cause seemed to want the news distorted to suit their prejudices. Now public opinion is realizing that an editor holds a public trust, and that the newspapers are the arteries through which flow public information and public intelligence—the very life blood of the nation itself. The public conscience of to-day fully understands and demands that the news columns must be accurate in all things, and fair to all alike. The papers which pander to political or other prejudices by false statements are dying fast and they ought to die. The doctrine that politics is modified warfare in which everything is fair belongs to a bygone day. Newspapers, like railroads, are common carriers. There must be no rebates, no discriminations, no partiality. Coloring the news articles to keep them from contradicting the editorials is a criminal act, whether the statutes say so or not.

From an Editor's Point of View

While declaring that, "in a very vital sense the press in a nation under democratic government is a public utility," the editor of the *Springfield Republican* has pointed out the dangers of acceptance of all the logical implications:

The *Republican* has examined most of the attacks on the Associated Press with lively interest. The tendency to regard a news collecting agency as a monopolistic public utility that should be regulated and restrained by the government like interstate railroads is one of the notable aspects of recent criticism. In no case, however, has the idea been developed logically, so as to reveal clearly the sharp contradiction between it and the principle of free speech and free press, which is a bulwark of a democratic civilization. The superficiality of the anonymous writer on the Associated Press in the July *Atlantic* is particularly apparent in his easy solution called "government restraint" for a news agency which "has much in common with the ordinary public utility monopoly," and which "should therefore be treated like a public utility corporation."

Newspapers are already under the restraint of the libel laws. Within a year the *Republican* has been the defendant in a libel suit, which it lost. To establish a new form of government supervision, regulation and restraint along the lines suggested, however, with the inevitable government press commission to do the supervising, regulating and restraining, would mean nothing less than the revival of the medieval censorship, which still flourishes in such a despotic and backward country as Russia or in such a capital as Mexico City during a military dictatorship. "If its news were none the less unfair," says the medievalist *Atlantic* writer, "some arrangement could presumably be made for government restraint."

The Associated Press itself prints nothing. Individual papers print the news furnished by it, and the owners of those papers are legally responsible for the printing of (unfair) statements or inaccurate reports. Government regulations or supervision that begins before the news is printed is necessarily a government censorship in the United States quite as much as in Turkey or Russia. And the supervision would necessarily have to begin before the news was printed, if the government were to supervise the output of the Associated Press. One can see in this plan nothing, in effect, but a government official in every Associated Press office censoring the dispatches sent to the newspapers taking the Associated Press service. How else could government regulations be made practical and effective?

If the Associated Press were supervised, all news agencies should be supervised, whether they were large or small, coöperative or proprietary. There are all kinds in this country. In principle, also, it is certain that the government supervision should extend to every individual newspaper, because in its important local field each newspaper does its own news gathering and is often the source of important news despatches sent forth to the

country. We shall not labor this point, but we are convinced that direct government supervision of the publishing of the newspapers themselves is as crying a need as government supervision of an agency like the Associated Press. For the worst abuses chargeable to the press are to be seen in their rankest growth on particular journals often very widely circulated and rich enough to gather their own news from the ends of the earth independently of all other agencies.

Even if government regulation of the press were in the least consistent with the constitutional guaranties of freedom of speaking and printing, the vicious absurdity of the suggested government censorship over news could be demonstrated. What is "unfair" news? Who can be presumed to be an infallible arbiter of such a question? A military censorship in time of war is permissible and often desirable, for obvious reasons. The military censor of news dispatches cuts out anything that might aid the enemy. But in the civil life of a democracy, no possible analogy to a military system exists. A government censorship of news is as repugnant to a free and democratic society as is a government censorship of editorial opinions. For, under no circumstances, could there ever be a fixed standard of what is the truth, or what the facts may be, in relation to any happening of human concern and interest. All incidents and events of whatever nature must be reported through a human medium, and, in view of the unavoidable imperfection of all human mediums, it is nonsense to set up a government supervisor as a judge of the truth in the news of the day. The historic vice of official censorship, as every one knows, is that the government censor has a government bias. Socialists occasionally complain of the Associated Press. Would they submit to the press censorship of a government official representing a capitalist administration? Would capitalists or employers be satisfied with the news that had filtered through the censorship of labor union or socialist government?

It seems ridiculous to discuss such a question in this generation. The news of the day is history while it is hot, just out of the bowl of chaos; and the truthful presentation of it is infinitely difficult for the most conscientious observers. The historians perpetually wrangle over the news even when it is in cold storage. No Protestant and Catholic writers could ever agree upon the history of Martin Luther's rupture with the papacy. Republicans and Progressives are never likely to agree as to the simple facts of the division of 1912 in the Republican Party. In view of the incontestable facts, freedom to gather, distribute and print news should be unrestrained by an officialdom itself as sure to be biased or selfishly interested as any or all of us concerned in these affairs.

There are as many news aspects to an event as there are possible interpretations of it, and the most practical way of getting all those aspects presented to the world is to maintain a free press.

But condemnation of the government regulation idea as an undemocratic flareback to a medieval censorship commits no one to the defense of the existing abuses of the press. In a very vital sense, moreover, the press in a nation under democratic government is a public utility exercising functions of publicity indispensable to the success of government by the people. Yet it cannot be regulated like a gas company, in the printing of the news of the day, without re-establishing a government censorship as fatal to the underlying principle of freedom in printing and speaking as government supervision of public worship would be fatal to the cherished principle of the free exercise of religion.

An editor's appreciation of the special privileges enjoyed by a newspaper and its character as a public institution is expressed in the following statement by J. H. Harrison, editor of the Danville (Illinois) *Commercial News*:

An editor may own his newspaper, may have title to it as property; he may claim the dividends, if such there are; but there is something else that is not his. And yet it is his greatest asset; it is that thing on which he cashes in. I mean that quality which we call "good will," or "influence," or "prestige," or "the power of the press." That is only a trust in his hands, for which he must render an accounting.

Every new subscriber is an addition to the trust, an added obligation. The reader yields to the editor the right and privilege of leading, either for good or ill. That editor who does not see it in this light and who is not ruled by the consciousness of this great obligation is, I assert, not fit to be an editor.

It must be admitted that there are editors not thus high-minded. There are editors who are like a small boy in possession of a piece of artillery, which he would fire off for the fun of the noise, without comprehending or caring for the consequences of his act.

To succeed truly a newspaper must realize that it is a public institution.

Terms of the Implied Contract

It is not difficult to frame a contract or franchise, after the manner of public utility franchises, pointing out on the one hand the privileges granted to the newspaper by the people of the community, and on the other hand the obligations for good

service. Such a contract was published some years ago by Adolph S. Ochs. The contract was to be entered into by the "Guardians of the homes of greater New York, parties of the first part; and the New York Times, party of the second part." One clause of it follows:

The New York *Times* will be issued as a morning newspaper, said newspaper to be well edited, well printed and of the highest class, and shall contain all the news that's fit to print, avoiding sensationalism, scandal-mongering and all things that offend against good morals and against good taste; encouraging good citizenship and good government; a newspaper that can, with entire confidence, be admitted into the family circle for the benefit, use and enjoyment of parents and children, of young men and young women.

Twenty-five years later, Mr. Ochs, in the introduction to a history of his newspaper, declared that the *Times* had kept faith with the public:

So far as the management is concerned, we can say without fear of any contradiction from the thousands who have been employed on the *Times*, that never a line appeared in its columns to pay a real or imaginary debt, or to gain expected favors. It owes no man or interest any support or good will that it does not owe to every good man and worthy cause.

Danger in the "Utility" Idea

The conception of a newspaper as a public utility, in fact if not in name, represents a tremendous advance beyond the crude notion that it is a mere piece of private property. But, at best, this higher conception is only a stepping-stone to the more adequate view of the newspaper as the instrument of the profession of journalism.

The utility idea contains the dangerous fallacy that newspaper publishing is on a plane with other activities supplying commodities to the public—that it is primarily a business. It also has concealed in it the false implication that the "commodity" supplied to the public must be as nearly as possible what the greatest number of patrons wants it to be. It also leads logically to the right of public control through censorship.

Professional Attributes in General

Very few of those who protest the right of journalism to be called a profession deny that the professional ideal is worthy and that if journalism could attain it without compromising its freedom, the world would be gainer. For the professional ideal introduces altruism and social consciousness as dominating concepts.

If a formal definition of a profession is sought, it will be found to run something like this:

A vocation in which a professed knowledge of some department of learning is used by its practical application to the affairs of others, either in advising, guiding, or teaching them, or in serving their interests or welfare. The word implies (1) professed attainments in special knowledge as distinguished from mere skill, (2) a practical dealing with affairs as distinguished from mere study or investigation, (3) an application of such knowledge to uses for others as a vocation, as distinguished from its pursuit for one's own purposes.

This definition is intended to describe the general characteristics of the so-called learned professions. To what degree does journalism fit this description?

Professional Attributes of Journalism

Let it be understood that nothing is to be gained by attempting to attach a professional label to an occupation which does not merit the distinction. That sort of thing merely invites ridicule. But with respect to journalism the question is pertinent and also important, for several compelling reasons:

1. Through several generations society has evinced a need for such services as journalism, conducted in the professional spirit, could provide. With the drift towards democratic forms of government, and with the growth of social consciousness, this need has become accentuated.

2. Experience has shown, more and more clearly, that journalism conducted on a nonprofessional basis, as a mere business, is not only of inferior utility but is fraught with dangers to social well-being.

3. The growing number of men in journalism who welcome the attainment of a full professional status by their vocation represents an element worthy to exert leadership and not a mere group of visionaries.

4. The objections made to the acceptance by journalism of a formal professional status have to do mostly with details rather than with fundamental principles, and with difficulties that should not be regarded as beyond solution. Other objections represent a conservatism worthy of respect, but hardly, in this age, to be granted complete dominance.

How, then, does journalism measure up to the specifications for a profession?

The First Characteristic

With respect to educational requirements, journalism resembles the ministry more than it does the law or medicine or engineering. It has no such body of special knowledge as is required in any one of the latter professions. An imposter, however clever, would be unable long to pass himself off as a lawyer or a doctor in active practice; but he might succeed in doing so as a minister or an editor. Not all positions in journalism require the practice of any considerable technique. But from the standpoint of what a journalist *ought to be*, the educational requirements are as great as in any occupation. What they lack as to specialization, they more than make up for as to breadth. The theory that anybody can be an editor is pernicious. It accounts for much of the disrepute that is attached to the business of newspaper publishing. So long as a few thousand dollars enables whoever will to become the owner and editor of a rural newspaper, and so long as a few million dollars enables whoever will to own and direct a metropolitan newspaper, and so long as a desire to be a reporter is all that is required to write for a newspaper, so long will journalism fall below professional levels of public usefulness.

But the fact that it does not always rise to professional levels is a remediable shortcoming. It can be remedied in a generation if those who appreciate the social need and the journalistic opportunity bestir themselves.

The educational requirements of the journalist are as broad as all knowledge. If he is a reporter he must understand the subjects discussed by the people with whom he talks and whose addresses he "covers." He should know something about music, art, dramatics, for he may be called upon to write about them. When he does not have a general knowledge of such subjects as sociology, economics, history, the natural sciences, philosophy, literature, and the arts, he can not grasp the significant; he can not interpret; he can only seize the flashy details of human interest or the familiar commonplaces that tend to make journalism a byword among people of culture. The prestige of superior journalism suffers for the crudities of that which is inferior.

One newspaper publisher appealed to his fellow members of the International Editorial Association to make this pledge:

I will employ no cub who is not a graduate of either a high school or a college. I will employ no person who does not intend to make journalism a life work, and who has not demonstrated unusual ability to write and to mix and coöperate with his fellow students. I will give preference to the graduates of the recognized schools of journalism.

A city newspaper executive, not himself a graduate of a college, declared that,

A liberal education is being looked upon more and more as a requisite in the newspaper profession. I don't mean necessarily a college education, but at least its equivalent. For a newspaper man is a reader; if he hasn't done it while in college, he must do it outside and afterwards. He must acquire the process of analytical thought, either through a broad, general education or by gradually assimilating it outside of college.

The newspaper executive in an editorial position, in addition to the educational requirements of a reporter, needs a sense of literary values which only broad reading affords. He must be able to penetrate and understand the public mind, which is not so much an intuitive faculty as a cultural one. He must have a sound philosophy of life, social sympathies, vision—all of them representing the finest fruitage of education.

Both the reporter and the editor need an understanding of the technique of their vocation. Not merely the technique of some one office in which they happen to be employed, but the technique of the best types of journalism everywhere. They need some such background for their life work as is afforded by study of the history of journalism and of comparative journalism. They need, above all, well considered notions as to the meaning of it all, the function of the newspaper, its responsibilities.

The journalist's own conception of his educational needs is presented in the curricula of schools and departments of journalism, for the curricula were developed not by academicians but by men active and successful in journalism. They were developed from small beginnings by the experimental method, and their breadth of scope and depth of specialization are such as the requirements of professional journalism seem to demand.

As to the first characteristic of the professions, then, it may safely be said that the responsibilities of journalism call for as great educational attainments as any other calling and that this fact is coming to be fully recognized.

The Second Characteristic

That journalism involves a "practical dealing with affairs" needs no demonstration. That side of it has not failed of appreciation, though the directions in which the journalist's activities might be carried out have seemed to multiply beyond the editor's vision even a generation ago. Little of the cloistered life is permitted the journalist—too little.

The Third Characteristic

In "the application of his knowledge to uses for others, as distinguished from its pursuit for his own purposes," the journalist easily establishes his right to be called professional. And yet not so easily as seems to be imagined by some. Supplying the public with information is not necessarily anything more than a business activity. It may be even a reprehensible business activity, as in the case of a scandal sheet. Supplying the public with a newspaper that deserves to be described as

a high-grade commodity is without doubt a meritorious enterprise but may differ little from the business of manufacturing and marketing a high-grade breakfast food or a popular laundry soap.

The point at which journalism becomes the thing demanded by the best interests of society—becomes professional—is the point at which it undertakes to do things for which it is not directly paid; things which are not “nominated in the bond”; which are not required of it by good business ethics; things which only the professional spirit enables it to recognize as obligatory.

A doctor might be a high-grade business man, giving a dollar's worth of service for every dollar received; but admitting no obligation beyond that point—doing nothing towards improving the public health, rendering no service unless reasonably sure that remuneration was certain, always taking into account his own interests—he might thus commercialize his vocation and still be called a doctor; but no discerning judge would pronounce him a professional man—only a masquerader in a borrowed garb. So with the editor who commercializes journalism. In spite of his good business ethics, he is condemned by his unwillingness to pay what it costs to give more than good measure, by his unwillingness to accept professional responsibilities—by his sins of omission.

Group Declarations

Each person, in proportion to his cynicism, discounts any public declaration of principles by a group. It is true that such declarations originate with the idealistic minority and that the unanimous vote by which they are adopted represents, besides this idealism, a large amount of indifference and a larger amount of only momentary enthusiasm. Nevertheless such pronouncements do erect a standard, they crystallize the best sentiment in the group, they are likely to be educative. In respect to the professional obligations of journalism, the utterances of editorial groups are unmistakable.

From the canons of journalism adopted by the American Society of Newspaper Editors:

The right of a newspaper to attract and hold readers is restricted by nothing but considerations of public welfare. The use a newspaper makes of the share of public attention it gains serves to determine its sense of responsibility, which it shares with every member of its staff. A journalist who uses his power for any selfish or otherwise unworthy purpose is faithless to a high trust.

From the Oregon code of ethics for journalism:

We will regard our privilege of writing for publication or publishing for public consumption as an enterprise that is social as well as commercial in character, and therefore will at all times have an eye against doing anything counter to social interest.

From the preamble to the Missouri code:

The profession of journalism is entitled to stand side by side with the other learned professions and is, far more than any other, interwoven with lines of public service. The journalist can not consider his profession rightly unless he recognizes his obligation to the public. A newspaper does not belong solely to its owner and is not fulfilling its highest functions if used selfishly.

From the Texas Press Association code:

We believe in journalism as an honorable profession and recognize the opportunities for service to the commonwealth.

Individual Expression

Similar views held by individual editors and by persons outside of journalism are met with on every hand. The publisher of the Wichita (Kansas) *Beacon*, Henry J. Allen, writes as follows:

The *Beacon's* conception of a newspaper's duty is that it is one hundred per cent its duty to print the news, but there are additional percentages which it must assume in order to merit that moral support of the community which we consider indispensable.

It would not be worth while to publish a newspaper purely as a business proposition, even though it might prosper. The additional percentages are concerned with those moral obligations which come along with the privilege of talking to the public.

These percentages are concerned with the laying of substantial foundations deep under the consciousness of the public.

The right-minded newspaper often does things that are for the

time unnoticed. They may even bring censure, with no praise. They may not cater to the passions or prejudices of the people. But they do form a part of the moral fiber of the community. Hidden deep under the surface they may never come to light except in times of great stress or emergency, when there is a rigid test.

The newspaper that can not pass such tests cannot be called anything but a money-making device, without ideals, without responsibility to the public.

It is sometimes a challenging responsibility to publish a newspaper. It is a thing that hammers continually—every day—softly upon each door, like the falling leaves or snow. But the accumulated weight is that of an avalanche.

As a builder, the *Beacon* must help lay the foundations of the community. Those foundations are not concerned with bank accounts or stores of oil, wheat or corn or herds of cattle, nor with wealth of merchandise. They are concerned with the great inner purposes of the people, the purposes that concern the soul and fine, sturdy citizenship. Where there is no vision the people perish. Where there is no moral fiber, all the wealth of which Coronado dreamed will not avail. Where opportunism, demagoguery and blind greed rule, there is where the nation begins to rot and weaken.

A statement by James Bryce, in his *Modern Democracies*, may be taken as representative of that outside opinion as to the functions of the press which is based on intelligent observation:

A newspaper wears two aspects; discharges two functions. In one aspect it is a commercial undertaking. It sells news to those who wish to buy news. It sells space in its columns to advertisers. . . . Its other aspect is that of a guide and adviser, seeking to form the opinion and influence the action of the public. . . . No one will suppose that an indication of the dangers which misuse of the power of the press may bring implies any disparagement of the invaluable services it renders in modern free countries. Without it, there could be no democracy in areas larger than were the city communities of the ancient world. The newspaper enables statesmen to reach the whole people by their words, and keeps legislatures and executive officials under the eyes of the people. Itself irresponsible, it enforces responsibility upon all who bear a part in public work. It is because the press alone can do and is doing so much salutary and necessary work that attention needs to be called to any causes which might, by shaking public confidence in it, impair its usefulness to the community.

Functions of Journalism

The tasks of journalism are reviewed elsewhere in this book; but an enumeration of its major functions may be permitted here as pertinent to our purpose of picturing the tremendous opportunities at the door of this youngest of the professions.

Any plan for grouping the functions of the press involves repetition and arbitrary classification, but it is helpful in suggesting a variety of points of view.

Services to the Individual

Among those services which may be regarded as being of interest primarily to the individual are: to lessen his isolation; broaden his information; interpret for him the meaning of events; afford entertainment; influence his action; give advice; stimulate new interests; awaken his sense of responsibility; champion his cause against injustice; socialize him; present commercial opportunities; open his heart and pocketbook in the interest of worthy causes; correct his scale of values and his philosophy of life; cultivate his tastes; educate him in sound finance; protect him from dishonest advertisers.

Services to the Community

Among the newspaper's opportunities for service to the community are: to improve health conditions; promote educational facilities; support moral and religious influences; encourage public improvements; throw light on the administration of public affairs; unify community thought and interests; discourage factionalism; dispel rumors; afford a business clearing house; "substitute the deliberative mind for the mob mind"; teach the community to play; maintain an open forum for the discussion of public interests.

Service to Society

Even the smallest newspaper has its part in affairs far broader than its community, such as: to advocate good government; to stand for law and order; to expose the weakness of a law or an institution and assist in its improvement; to pro-

mote justice; to stimulate independent thinking on public questions; to point out the good in the world; to discourage sectionalism; to help remove the causes of class hatreds; to work for peace between nations; to reflect public opinion; to make good citizenship attractive.

It thus appears that journalism at its best has all the attributes of a profession and that in so far as its possibilities are not fully realized society is the loser. In other words, if there was no profession of journalism, the interests of society would require that such a profession be created.

Having the attributes, how nearly does it meet the formal requirements of a profession?

General Professional Requirements

While not contained in the formal definition of a profession, there are several characteristics that seem essential to the existence and maintenance of effective professional standards. It is pertinent, then, to examine those forms by which other professions are governed and to inquire regarding their adoption in journalism. They are the provisions as to preparation, entrance, conduct, and supervision:

1. A large and increasing proportion of those entering law, and practically all of those entering medicine or the ministry, prepare themselves by a course in a professional school.
2. They are admitted to their calling by a license, following a successful examination.
3. They subscribe, either formally or informally, to a code embodying the standards of conduct in the vocation.
4. They are, in theory at least, held to a practical observance of this code by an authority within the profession, having legal recognition, which pronounces judgment in cases of alleged malpractice and has power to exclude from the profession.

The Educational Requirement

The establishment of courses and departments and schools of journalism which began in colleges and universities well within the present century was not greeted with applause by

many newspapers. It is not necessary to inquire here into the reasons for this opposition since it is possible to say that the unfriendly attitude has almost entirely disappeared.

Such professional training is now offered, through what are regarded as measurably complete curricula, in more than a score of institutions. It is offered in abbreviated form in perhaps fifty colleges and universities. It is offered to the extent of two or three technical subjects, in addition to regular college courses in English, literature, history, sociology, economics, etc., in more than a hundred other institutions of higher learning. Mention might also be made of the fact that hundreds of high schools teach journalistic writing, though such instruction is to be regarded as preparatory rather than professional. The number of students in schools and departments of journalism runs into many thousands and the number of graduates going out each year into the newspaper field is large.

Complete standardization has not yet been attained in journalistic education. The problem of affording practical experience on newspapers while in college is not solved. The need for special courses in history, science, economics, etc., adapted to the particular requirements of the journalist, has not been fully met. In fact the academic training of journalists is yet in its beginnings. But its value is now seldom questioned and its product of young men and women is not sufficient to meet the growing demand, based on the realization among publishers and editors that journalistic training in college is so great an advantage as to be almost a necessity.

It thus seems fair to say that the educational requirement is being more and more fully met each year.

Licensing

As to the second requirement, licensing the practitioner in the profession, little progress has been made in journalism. From time to time proposals in this direction have been made. Bills setting up a licensing system for journalists have been introduced into state legislatures. They have failed of enactment and such failure has seemed to give great satisfaction to practically all newspapers.

Since our main purpose at present is to get a clear view of the nature of journalism as it is, consideration of the merits and the difficulties of licensing may be deferred until we take up the subject of measures for the improvement of journalism.

A Code

As to the third feature, adoption of a code of ethics, great progress has been made since 1910 when the Kansas Editorial Association became the first such association to adopt a code. Prior to that time individual newspapers had codes, which were little more than office rules; individual editors announced "platforms" setting forth their conception of their responsibilities; and people in general told the newspapers what their duties were. Since that time many organizations of editors and publishers and newspaper writers have clarified their ideals by putting them into printed form. Declarations by individuals have increased in number. The subject of ethics has acquired an unprecedented prominence in the newspaper world.

Formal assent to a code by one entering journalism is nowhere required, but an informal acceptance is taken for granted.

Enforcement

The fourth feature, a practice committee or board having authority, does not exist in journalism. One newspaper maintains virtually such a committee in connection with its bureau of accuracy and fair play, and others have something similar, though usually the authority is in the hands of one man. But no state or regional association has attempted to function in this manner.

Summary

Journalism, then, lacks the machinery for the enforcement of its standards. It is professional in its nature and in its spirit, but only partly so in its form.

But the responsibility for its shortcomings does not rest entirely on its own shoulders. Two closely related facts determining that responsibility must not be overlooked: first, that

society has much to do with the development of any profession, the very existence of which is accounted for by the prior existence of a human need to which it ministers; and second, that the provisions for the conduct of any profession, are created, not entirely from within, but through a partnership of effort by those within the profession and those outside. Standards are not erected solely by those whose conduct is to be guided by them, but by reciprocal influences having two sources, progressive thinking by practitioners within the vocation, and the wisdom of the general public.

The future of journalism is in its own hands, to be sure, but not solely in its own hands. Every reader of newspapers has something to say about it, some responsibility. The possibilities of the future are inviting enough to encourage the most earnest coöperative endeavor.

CHAPTER X

TRADITIONS AND TENDENCIES IN JOURNALISM

Let it be here related how John Campbell, first American editor, was on his way to the Boston post office one day in 1704, with the entire edition of his two-column, two-page paper under his arm, when he happened to meet a queerly dressed man, also with an armful of printed matter, but unlike anything John had seen before.

"Pardon me," said John, who had much of the intellectual curiosity which has since made his town famous, "but what, may I ask, are you carrying?"

"Oh, it's just the Sunday paper," replied the man. "I brought one back with me to read on the way."

"Back from where?" inquired John, forgetting, in his wonderment, that those who stop to converse in the shadow of Old South Church say, "back from whence."

"Back from the Twentieth Century," explained the man—"1924, to be exact. I came by the Fourth Dimension and Relativity Route. Just got here. Nice little town."

"May I see that paper?" demanded John, oblivious to the interesting scientific aspects of the situation.

He took the monstrosity in his hands—two pounds of paper and ink, 144 eight-column pages; as much reading matter as one would find in a dozen volumes of Cotton Mather's sermons—and Dr. Mather was not given to short ones either.

Editor Campbell looked it over and then gazed at the little bundle of the *Boston News Letter* lying on the cobble stones where he had dropped it. Finally he spoke:

"How did that ever grow into this?"

The man happened to know the answer, and he proceeded to outline the story of American journalism. It took him four hours, and the *Boston News Letter* would have missed the mail

that day if its editor had not also been postmaster, so that the "limited" waited at the hitch rack out front until John got around.

It was truly a marvelous relation the stranger made, ending with the incredible but true statement that one edition of the paper he carried required six hundred tons of printing stock—enough to supply the *Boston News Letter* for fifty thousand years.

"How did that ever grow into this?"

The question may be answered superficially by recounting the achievements of inventive genius in providing the equipment for modern newspaper production—the paper mills, presses, slug-casting machines, stereotyping processes, engraving methods. Or by describing the development in news gathering facilities—the telegraph and telephone, the radio, and the spry young reporters' legs. Or by tracing the educational processes by which a universal reading public has been evolved. Or by explaining the coming forth of that highly significant factor in journalistic affairs, the advertiser.

But, after all, the modern newspaper is not merely two pounds of paper and ink, nor is it only a bundle of information and opinion and entertainment and advertisements. It is a living thing, a personality, an influence, a builder, and, at times—let us concede something to the critics—a destroyer.

"How did that ever grow into this?" is best understood through examination of the newspaper's essential character, or, since character is most clearly reflected in habitual forms of conduct, through observation of its habits or usages. The habits of journalism are commonly spoken of as its traditions. What, then, have been its traditions in the past, and what ones are still dominant?

Every profession or business has its standard forms of practice, its controlling ideas, its formulae for solving its problems. Not every member of any group will sanction or adopt all the notions of all the other members of the group but there will be enough unanimity to build up a central structure of practice adequate to bear the weight of the vocation as a whole.

As generation succeeds generation the persistently effective

concepts and their resultant practices achieve the standing of "traditions" in the profession or business. The more general of them constitute a sort of vocational philosophy, the more specific make up the body of rules governing relationships within the group and with the outside world. Some of them are wholly within the realm of ethics, others are based on expediency alone, others are the sort of mixtures that may be described by the term, "practical wisdom." The first take written form sometimes in "codes" or "canons," the others in "office rules" or "trade union rules."

Since we shall make a rather careful examination of these codes and rules later, it is only necessary here to refer, by way of illustration, to such general traditions in the legal profession as fidelity to the client's highest interest and respectful attitude towards the courts, and to such specific rules as that against soliciting professional employment; and in the medical profession, the general tradition that a physician must labor for the alleviation of suffering without regard to the risk to his own health or life or to financial return, and such specific rules as that against splitting fees.

No body of tradition is so firmly knit as to resist change. It expresses respect for the past, deference to the experience of others and their ideals of conduct. In other words, it represents the conservatism of the group. But, like every other living thing, it is constantly being modified by growth or deterioration, by progress or reaction. So, a transverse view of any body of tradition will reveal some of it functioning at its maximum of activity, some healthy but immature, and some declining in strength; and a longitudinal or historical view will show instances, here and there, of atrophy and death.

The first step in arriving at the social values of any occupation is to examine its structure of tradition, to understand the standards approved in theory, and to appreciate the degree to which theories are realized in practice. It is our present task to discover the meaning of such a phrase as "according to the best traditions of journalism"; to describe some traditions of the past; to venture an opinion as to what traditions are now diminishing in authority and what ones are growing and

are likely to rule the future. Such an inquiry should assist the student of journalistic practice in judging the successful or unsuccessful application of theories to present-day problems of the newspaper office and likewise in appraising the recent efforts at crystalizing traditions into codes and canons.

Classification of Journalistic Traditions

As the term, tradition, is defined and used, it covers not only the beliefs and usages handed down from generation to generation, but also stories of notable exploits in a given field of endeavor. Every newspaper office has its "traditions" in the form of stories about great victories in the battle for news, crises in the paper's history, editors and reporters of picturesque personalities. These, of course, have a place in the present discussion only by way of illustration. Our interest lies in journalistic usages and beliefs. Moreover, it lies in the traditions within the profession itself, more than in the impressions of the public as to what constitute the motives and standards of journalism.

As a matter of convenience it seems desirable to classify traditions in three groups: obsolete, obsolescent, and active. The boundaries of these three groups are, to be sure, not always clearly discernible, since even an obsolete usage may still exert an influence in current practice. But looked at from these progressive points of view the subject is revealed in something of its evolutionary aspect.

The following rapid survey necessarily includes mention of several topics which receive more adequate examination elsewhere.

Obsolete Traditions

The history of American journalism presents a number of well-recognized characteristics or customs in the profession which are no longer dominating.

Bohemianism

The old-fashioned reporter who posed as a romantic person, with the picturesque dash and lawlessness of a musketeer, now

has the unreality of a stage caricature. To some extent he was a creature of the popular imagination, but he also had a real existence and roamed the fields of metropolitan journalism in the nineteenth century. Country journalism did not know him, but it had his counterpart in the tramp printer who wandered from town to town, working a few weeks in a place, and usually celebrating the eve of his departure by a glorious spree.

As the activities of men have been reduced to system and order much of the poetry of life has been changed to prose, or at least to poetry of another sort. The peddlers of an earlier day were more picturesque, perhaps, than our modern merchant, and the doctors, as Molière saw them, more interesting than our physicians. So the old-time oratorical pleaders before the bar, the circuit riders, the captains of finance, all have about them a glamour lacking in their modern successors. Everything, from war to courtship, seems to have substituted system for dash, though we trust that true courage and gallantry have not diminished. So in journalism, the reporter of the devil-may-care type has given way to a less adventurous young man, though not less enterprising, and the bacchanalian reveler has been succeeded by an individual who knows that steady nerves and a clear head are necessary to his job.

In regard to the old type of reporter, Eric W. Allen has written:

I have still a warm place in my heart for the old-time sea-going reporters. They were able men, enthusiasts, and made a religion of newspaper work—they would never call it journalism.

They could cut circles around the reporter of to-day in getting a verbatim report of the secret discussion of the grand jury, the history of every ballot taken by a trial jury, the story of the bribe money payments that swung an election, or the discreditable past history of a prominent citizen.

When I began newspaper work nearly twenty years ago, this old soldier-of-fortune type of reporter had not yet disappeared; neither had the hell-roaring city editor, who prided himself on his ability to curse out a reporter and his willingness to "fire" him on very slight provocation. Newspaper executives were not infrequently admired in the local room in proportion to their tendency to go into perfect paroxysms of rage, to climb on their desks,

tear their hair and then to rush through every department of the paper like a cyclone, leaving terror and confusion and vacant jobs in their wake.

Picturesque? Yes. But hardly adapted to journalism as now conceived.

Poverty

Postal regulations have helped to educate country publishers in better business methods in handling their circulation accounts. In former days few subscriptions were paid in advance, with the result that the editor had a large number of debtors owing small amounts which they were not much inclined to pay. Collecting small bills personally over a considerable territory was impractical and was also destructive of good will because it was not the accepted custom. But the editor had a convenient collector in the newspaper itself. And he used it sometimes too freely.

The most obvious way to take the sting out of a request for payment of a bill is to explain one's great need for the money. And so it was only natural that editors should appeal to their delinquent subscribers through vivid descriptions of their own cramped financial circumstances. In such manner a kind of traditional poverty invested the newspaper office. Any collection of old newspapers, and some not so old, will yield painful examples of the editor's fears of the sheriff and his willingness to accept farm product as well as money. No doubt there was much truth in such statements, but it was a kind of truth which to-day is not so freely advertised.

Neither is the condition so common as formerly. The attractions of newspaper publishing fifty years ago were relatively great to those having no business ability to go along with their ambition to become publicists. Publishing, both in the city field and in the country field, has become a well ordered business, whether or not it has become commercialized, in a way damaging to the professional service of good journalism. If one may judge by the titles of papers read by editors at their conventions, the chief concern of these gatherings is the solution of business, not editorial, problems.

Combativeness

The golden age of the fighting editor seems to have passed, but not without leaving a gory history of physical combats precipitated by provocative articles. That this violence should have characterized journalism is not strange. It was representative of the spirit of the times.

Personal encounters have marred the records of some of the greatest American editors. One book, published about the middle of the last century, *The Press Gang*, gives the details of twenty-four "editorial duels." It also devotes a chapter to "Fights and Floggings of Editors," in which it appears that the aggressive reader usually got the better of his journalistic antagonist.

One editor is quoted as saying that, "An editor who never earns a flogging must be timid and irresolute in the management of his paper."

In another book of that period, Marryatt's *Diary*, we are told that a famous editor "has been horse-whipped, kicked, trodden under foot, spat upon, and degraded in every possible way: but all this he courts because it brings money. Horse-whip him and he will bend his back to the lash and thank you; for every blow is worth so many dollars. Kick him, and he will remove his coat tails that you may have a better mark. Spit upon him and he prizes it as a precious ointment. One day after the punishment, he publishes a full and particular account of how many kicks, tweaks of the nose, or lashes he may have received."

In more recent years a lessening of the fighting propensities of editors is noticeable. Only occasionally is one found like the fine old man who, until his death recently, was accustomed to exhibit to callers at his editorial office a variously bent stove poker, every kink having its history of contact with the person of some irate reader of his paper who visited the office to have it out with the editor.

This tradition went out with the replacement, in cities, of personal journalism by institutional journalism, and with the general improvement in manners and taste everywhere. Occa-

sional instances of the kind are heard of to-day but it is no longer traditional that an editor is a fighter.

If an occurrence of the kind takes place to-day, it seldom receives boastful mention in the paper, but is treated lightly, as in the case of a widely known and widely built editor who was attacked on the street by a woman wielding a horse-whip and who described in the next day's paper his flight back to his office at speed destructive of all fat men's records.

Newspaper Wars

That competing newspapers could live in peace, side by side, was almost an absurd idea in old-fashioned journalism. Abuse of one's "esteemed contemporary" persisted as an editorial duty until finally it became both a joke and an offence in the eyes of the public.

History records many famous newspaper wars, some of them duels between equals, others coalitions of several weaker publications for the destruction of the strongest. That the nuisance has been abated seems to be due more to the protest of readers than to satiety on the part of editors. It was discovered to be good business policy to cease giving the public something that it did not want, "the public" meaning, in this case, the better class of people—the same people who object to much that is still printed in newspapers. That portion of the public which, for example, would be glad to have cockfighting a recognized sport, delighted in editorial rows; but their approval was found to be less important than the endorsement of better citizens and their families. A few country editors keep up the practice of vituperative combat, but their number diminishes steadily.

Perquisites

The propriety of an editor's acceptance of favors from public service corporations has been seriously questioned in the last quarter of a century. Federal legislation putting an end to the free transportation evil has exerted a tremendous educational influence. That a journalist's obligation to the public must not be compromised by obligations elsewhere is becoming

a well-established principle, in theory and in practice. That practice should lag behind precept is inevitable; but neither in country nor in city journalism is the outlook to be regarded as discouraging.

In smaller matters, also, the editor's desire to be untrammelled seems to be awakening. He realizes that the potentialities of his relations to public opinion should not be recognized by a pass on the railroad and also that the same principle affects his acceptance of complimentary tickets to public entertainments. More and more, he insists on buying his theatre tickets and those of his dramatic critic, if he has one. More and more, his name on the list of supporters of any project means that he has made a cash subscription and not a gift of free publicity for which he received little credit.

The editor's self-respect and love of independence, together with the assistance of legislative enactments, have wrought a beneficent change in the matter of "perquisites." It is becoming plain that the editor who "sells out" in a conventional way, accepted as respectable, is nevertheless venal and a traitor to his primary obligations.

A journalist of thirty years experience, Henry Schott, has described the change thus:

In those days the newspaperman was, as a rule, ill paid, if paid at all. He was expected to be irresponsible and somewhat doubtful in his habits. When he ate, he was supposed to be the guest of some one; when he went to the theater he was a guest; when he rode on the railroad he went on a pass. Advertising bills were paid by merchandise. Everybody was willing to give the newspaperman of the old days anything but money. Money and the newspaperman were held as natural enemies.

It was a romantic picturesque existence, but it was far from just. Look through the ancient files in small town papers and you will find something along this line: "Mine host of the Leland Hotel chalked the editor's hat yesterday. He is a prince among men and conducts a hotel of which our City may well be proud." All of which meant that the editor had come into the restaurant of the hotel and received dinner without any money paid in return. When the maid at the dining room door put a chalk mark in his hat, it meant "no charge." To-day the journalist expects his financial rewards from the paper itself.

Anti-Feminism

That women had no place in journalism might, until comparatively recent years, have been spoken of as traditional. The present feeling is not inhospitable to them. Women have won recognition in several departments of the newspaper—reporting, special assignment work, advertising. During the World War many women were employed on copy desks, and at least one managing editor declared in print that he would be glad to continue to maintain a copy desk entirely of women. Some have achieved success as city editors and managing editors of smaller daily papers. Some are successful publishers of their own newspapers. Some are widely quoted paragraphers. In two or three decades women have pressed far beyond the boundaries of the society department which was formerly the only precinct granted to them.

Obsolescent Traditions*Personal Journalism*

In the cities, personal journalism has largely disappeared. In the smaller cities and towns, personal journalism exists much as it always has. Nothing has arisen to obstruct the public's plain view of the country editor, and nothing seems likely to arise in the near future except, here and there, the development of newspaper chains which are largely impersonal because based on nonresident ownership and, to some extent, non-resident management.

In the larger cities, however, the newspaper as an expression of one dominating personality is almost extinct. As a medium for leadership through editorial utterance by one man, it has entirely passed away, and there are no signs of the approach of a day when editorial giants will again rule in the metropolitan fields of opinion.

Partisanship

The drift towards political independence in metropolitan journalism and, to a less extent, in rural journalism, is steadily lessening the number of party organs. Thus a conspicuous

tradition of the first two centuries of American journalism becomes less authoritative. There are those who believe that the change is a desirable one so far as the urban press is concerned but that in rural towns a newspaper needs the nucleus of support that comes to it by reason of its unwavering allegiance to a political party. It is, in a sense, an attorney for the party and receives, in one form or another, a suitable retainer. It is doubtful that this idea will hold out against the general drift towards independence. The decrease in the number of papers in both cities and towns operates to lessen partisanship. That this decrease is altogether a good thing can hardly be established as yet, but it is an unmistakable tendency and must be reckoned with.

"Coloring" the News

At no time have more than a small minority of newspapers frankly supported the theory that they had a right to inject editorial opinion into the news columns, but a far greater number have pursued such a policy in practice. A recognition of the essential unfairness of such procedure has gained much ground in recent years.

It has been a general tradition in journalism that "the opposition" in politics or other matters need expect slight consideration. A welcome change is noticeable in this regard. It is by no means uncommon for a newspaper to give a fair and adequate report of a meeting held by an opposing political group, or to give in the news columns an uncolored statement of facts and arguments which in its editorial columns it denounces as fallacious. This mark of an increasing comprehension of the rights of the public is one of the most encouraging signs of the times journalistically.

Giving the Public What It Wants

This vicious doctrine of irresponsibility, discussed at length elsewhere, is listed here as an obsolescent tradition, with the admission that its poison is still actively working in the vital organs of the journalistic body and requires the most powerful antidotes in generous doses.

Provincialism

No observer in so broad a field as journalism can always be sure of his conclusions. Possibly the wish of the present writer is mother of the opinion. But it seems to him that the newspaper's traditional bondage to false loyalties is somewhat relaxed. Fewer editors seem to make it the cornerstone of their creed that their own town is the best town on earth, their state the best state, their section the best section, their country the best country in every respect, always right, and with nothing to learn from any other nation in this world or any other world. Patriotism is too fine a thing to be polluted with cant and nonsense. Cheerfulness in making the best of things as they are and optimism in the effort to improve them are too precious to be adulterated with the imbecilities of a vacuous oratory. Better things are expected of the journalist; and the general increase in intelligence and education has improved his opportunity to be sane and yet not unpopular.

Venality

The charge that newspapers sell their influence to the highest bidder is seldom heard to-day whereas fifty years ago it was a favorite criticism. Along with this should be included the charge of blackmailing propensities growing out of the weakness of some papers for gossip and scandal. Such practices can be spoken of as traditional only in the sense that they were popularly associated with journalism. All professions have had their black sheep.

Office Holding

There may be some question as to whether the conception of the newspaper as a stepping-stone to an elective or appointive office is obsolescent. Certainly the idea is prevalent enough to-day. But the views and the examples of many distinguished journalists seem to have strengthened the idea that the greatest success as an editor is incompatible with political ambitions. Many excellent newspapers are owned by politicians, but they seem to lack something of the independence and

disinterestedness and dignity required of the highest type of journalism. A profession worthy of the undivided loyalty and effort of the greatest of men loses something in becoming a means of approach to public office. Any editor who takes an office weakens his editorial influence by vitiating faith in his sincerity.

Faking

No one defends faking in the news columns with an intent to deceive the reader. A story of a sea serpent's playful antics off some almost deserted bathing beach may occasionally be permitted to enliven the summer dullness of news, but no one is deceived thereby. The old-fashioned "hoax" is recognized as an expensive luxury. Likewise the manufacture of imaginative details in a story is seldom encouraged. The reporter who turns in a story telling how, when a street sweeper had been run over by a truck, a scrub woman held his head in her lap until the ambulance came, is seldom ordered by his city editor to dress the lady in silk and have her step out of her limousine to do the act of mercy. Human interest stories are often embellished by fancy because they are accepted as entertainment features based on a shred of news only. Faking is almost obsolete.

Yellow Journalism

A sharp distinction between "yellow" and "sensational" journalism is useful. The former is deliberately deceptive—as when qualifying words in big headlines are printed in type too small to be noticed, and in other ingenious ways. It is indecent. It is socially destructive. Journalism that is merely sensational is not unclear, nor antisocial, nor deceptive—except as an exaggeration of emphasis is misleading. Its purpose to arrest attention, to win the "Gee whiz!" response from the reader is not unethical except as bad taste is unethical.

Yellow journalism, as here defined, is obsolescent; sensational journalism occupies a large portion of the metropolitan field. Sensational journalism is open to the charge of being superficial, cheap, typographically ugly, blatant, raw, silly,

and several other things, but its offenses are more against good taste than good ethics. It becomes yellow when it crosses the boundary of mere "jazz," either in content or in form, and becomes socially demoralizing.

Active Traditions

Some of the controlling ideas in journalism to-day are comparatively new. Others have been dominant since the earliest days of the press.

Among the latter are two or three which should, perhaps, be described as functions rather than traditions. They constitute the very essence of journalism; but they are so closely related to other aspects of the press that it seems desirable to mention them here. These traditional functions are: spreading information, expressing opinion, and reflecting public sentiment.

Spreading Information

This is, of course, the foundation on which the whole structure of journalism has been built. The need for which the earliest papers supplied satisfaction was the need for news of the outside world. Later the value of local news was appreciated. To-day the scope of the reporter's curiosity is as broad as the universe and as painstaking and systematic as a miner's search for the "dust" in his pan.

As a notable example of the exercise of the news instinct, historians of journalism point to the career of James Gordon Bennett, founder of the New York *Herald*. He is sometimes referred to as the "inventor" of news. His enterprise in getting foreign news from incoming ships, having matter put in type on trains, introducing news of finance and of the churches, and many other innovations is memorable. But enterprise in news getting is characteristic of the smallest as well as the greatest of publications. The supremacy of news has been greatly accentuated since the beginning of the World War, indeed it has been overemphasized by some whose view of journalism might be expected to extend beyond the mere recording of objection facts.

Expressing Opinion

Hardly less fundamental than the purpose of news dissemination is that of giving publicity to opinion held by the editor and offered as the right basis for the opinion of others. That this function of the press is not now at its maximum of effectiveness must be admitted. Much doubt is expressed as to the influence of the editorial page. Seldom does it dominate the paper as, for example, Greeley's editorials dominated the *Tribune*; but relatively few are the editors, even of small papers, who turn entirely away from this traditional feature of their work. The authoritative character of opinions in the larger newspaper is enhanced through specialization by those on the staff of editorial writers. Confidence in the sincerity and disinterestedness of the editorial column is all that is necessary to maintain its prestige.

The unfairness to the reader of permitting an editorial writer to express opinions he does not believe, on assignment from the editor-in-chief, in accordance with the paper's policy, is gaining universal recognition. That the practice is unfair to the editorial writer has always been sufficiently obvious. In newspapers having several editorial writers, the difficulty is easily solved, since it is not necessary, of course, that each writer agree with what other writers are saying for the editorial page. In far less enviable position is the editor of the smaller paper who does not happen to agree with the views of the publisher by whom he is employed.

Reflecting Public Sentiment

In the phraseology of the newspaper world, past and present, journalism is a reflector of the public mind. In some cases the eye to receive the reflected image is that of a legislator or an executive desirous of gauging public sentiment on some pending measure; in other cases it is the eye of a foreign observer interested in the reaction of a people to some international situation; in yet other instances it is the eye of a politician looking for clouds that betoken a storm or for a clear sky that promises a safe entrance into his harbor. In all cases this

functioning of the press is in harmony with the other processes of popular government.

Just how much, in any individual case, the opinion in a newspaper is the original and independent opinion of the editor, or the opinion of the editor as modified by other opinion, or the opinion of the public as manifested directly in communications or accounts of public gatherings or interviews or resolutions adopted relative to some issue, would be difficult to estimate. But, in the mass, newspaper opinion is public opinion. Conspicuous exceptions in which the ballot boxes have repudiated the newspapers do not invalidate the principle. But the news columns of an honest newspaper should forecast such a result, however contrary to the desires of the paper.

It sometimes seems that opinion reflected in the press is more conservative than that of the public. This is especially true in crises when feeling runs high among the people, as when a Maine is sunk in an unfriendly harbor. Responsibility has a steadying influence, as is commonly remarked of any extremist who accedes to power. The sensational paper that outdoes even the most vehement radicals is rare.

Entertaining the Reader

The importance of the entertainment element in newspapers has been increasingly apparent in recent years. That it is the duty of the newspaper to amuse its public is an interesting point of view in contrast with the almost utter seriousness of the older journalism. That this duty should ever be regarded as next in importance to printing the news is incredible only so long as one keeps away from the Sunday newspaper of our day. A writer in the *Nation* describing newspaperless days in New York during a strike, said:

New York without its customary newspapers was a curious sight to those accustomed to the solid rows of papers that usually hide men's faces in the subways and on the elevated. People who habitually sink their minds in the trivialities of the daily newspaper the moment they forsake their office cares and associates were chagrined to find themselves face to face with their own petty selves, forced through the weary ride homeward to stare

at the advertisements as their only escape from a too familiar ego. It was a revelation of the function of the modern daily newspaper, which is not so much to give an account of the world we live in as to provide a means of escape from that world—to supply unreal entertainment as a relief from real monotony.

Exaggerated or not, the statement indicates a patent tendency in our journalism. One phase of the development is the use of pictures to a greater extent than ever before. Pictures telling the news, pictures for entertainment only, pictures of interpretation. Whole newspapers made up of pictures. Mechanical invention is responsible to a large degree for the effort to relieve people of the labor of reading. To what extremes detrimental to the primary uses of journalism this tendency may run is yet to be discovered, but it is a matter deserving some thought on the part of journalists.

Accuracy

Reference to "the best traditions of journalism" embraces, among other virtues of the news gatherer and editor, that of accuracy. By some distinguished journalists it has been placed at the top of the list of requirements for good reporting. Of fifty editors who were recently asked to name the most important essential of good journalism, forty-six named accuracy. To some it may seem that accuracy should be taken for granted, like knowledge of the alphabet, but the practical consequences of inaccuracy are so serious that its avoidance becomes a matter of ethical necessity. Accuracy is much more than an item in technique.

With accuracy should be associated other traditional virtues of conscientious workmanship in reporting and presenting the news, such as brevity, clearness, simplicity, none of which, however, approaches accuracy in importance.

Speed

Obeying the mandate of those human instincts which place a tremendous premium on news which is fresh and information which quickly satisfies curiosity, journalism has long been characterized by pursuit of the maximum in speed. The public will

not tolerate suspense if it can help it. Its interest diminishes as the cube of the time since the event took place. As a result of the fact that a major factor in news value lies in its recency and the further fact that even a partial satisfaction of curiosity dissipates interest, newspaper competition has centered on speed. Enterprise has spent itself in devices for getting the news first. The most interesting stories of the newspaper office relate to famous beats or to adventures in expeditious news gathering.

In recent years something of the same competitive spirit has infected the editorial department. The deliberation necessary to the formation of sound opinions seems in danger of being supplanted by snap judgment formulated and delivered on a moment's notice.

Journalistic traditions are not always consistent. For example, the ideal of maximum speed conflicts with that of maximum accuracy. The results in many cases represent compromise between the two. Of which interest the greater sacrifice is made helps to determine the character of the newspaper.

Infallibility

A charge which few editors—or other people either, for that matter—can bear with much grace is that of being inconsistent. It amounts to an imputation of error, and none of us enjoys being accused of making mistakes, either of opinion or fact. The result of this attitude is an assumption of infallibility as a protective measure. It has characterized much of the journalism of the past and is still anything but rare. The editor who frankly admits that he has changed his mind or who boldly announces that consistency is not his chief aim in life is something of a curiosity. Perhaps it is unfair to expect the journalist to shed too many of his human attributes, but largeness of mind is a particularly desirable qualification for his high calling. It will undoubtedly contribute to the influence of the journalism of the future if it not only disclaims infallibility, as indeed most editors do now, but actually speaks and acts in accordance with such disclaimer. Of all the silly

fetiches worshiped by civilized men, consistency and its twin, infallibility, are the most ridiculous.

Freedom

Perhaps the most precious tradition in our journalism has been, and is, that it should enjoy freedom from censorship or governmental control. Constitutional guaranties are invoked whenever any restrictions are suggested beyond the existing libel laws and those governing privileged publications and rights as to transmission in the mails. It seems sometimes as though this conservatism stands in the way of legal measures which ought to be welcomed by responsible journalism as promising improvement in the profession as a whole.

Courage

Among the universal human virtues, courage in the support of truth is one of those which have been regarded as indispensable in good journalism. Honesty, unselfishness, and the others make up the list of personal excellencies looked for in that composite personality, a newspaper.

The most spectacular manifestation of courage is in the crusading in which newspapers, big and little, engage from time to time. Deeply entrenched abuses may be attacked, reforms advocated, bad men scourged from public life. Such activities are more exciting, but not necessarily more courageous, than decisions quietly made and executed by newspapers of the non-crusading type.

Several of the active tendencies in journalism have developed within the last few decades, or at least have become conspicuous during that period. Naturally they are not universal, but they are, in some cases, gaining acceptance rapidly.

Professional Consciousness

In spite of the protest of some editors and publishers who insist that journalism is nothing more than a business engaged in supplying the public with a commodity, and in spite of the ridicule of some who are afraid of being accused of idealism, the conviction is rapidly gaining ground that only as it assumes

professional responsibilities can journalism justify its existence.

This feeling has expressed itself in the numerous codes of ethics adopted in recent years by associations of editors and publishers. It is now grappling with the difficulties of establishing provisions as to the preparation of young men and women for journalism, their entrance into the vocation, and their conduct while in it—such provisions as restrict the practice of other professions.

Decency

An effort to determine whether a news story about an anti-social act is likely to exert a constructive or a destructive influence is more commonly made in newspaper offices than formerly. While not forgetting the deterrent power of publicity for criminals, the judicious editor is careful to measure the suggestiveness of an article, its possible brutalizing effect, its influence on the immature and the weak. He knows that lessons in crime and vice sometimes creep into the newspapers. He knows that many careful persons exclude newspapers of a certain type from their homes. In a practical way, he takes an interest in the psychology of suggestion and the ideals of decency and strives to fill his columns with significant rather than melodramatic news.

Commercialism

The growth of the industry of newspaper publishing until it has become one of the greatest industries in the world has lent prominence to the business side of journalism. The volume of advertising has passed all imagined bounds, as advertising has become more and more important in business. Even the country newspaper has acquired a business standing which it formerly lacked. The result is that critics of the press describe it as "commercialized."

The further fact that newspapers now attract capital seeking profitable investment, and that millions of dollars are required to buy a successful metropolitan paper, leads to the charge that our journalism is "capitalistic."

Both of these criticisms contain truth and must be taken ac-

count of by any one looking towards the future of journalism. Business success should be provocative of good journalism because it affords financial independence; but in practice commercialism shows itself in conflict with the professional ideal.

Promoting Good Government

In the main, journalism has stood for good government. Its searchlight is constantly thrown upon the official conduct of legislators and executives and upon the police and the judiciary. Abuses of this privilege of the press are not difficult to observe, but the incalculable benefits from its proper exercise raise a serious doubt that popular government could succeed without it.

Historically, the second Samuel Bowles may, perhaps, be pointed to as the most conspicuous and untiring editorial opponent of corrupt manipulators in politics. His *Springfield Republican* lived courageously up to the standard outlined by Bowles in the following statement, even to landing its editor in jail for a day, much to the augmentation of his popularity and honor:

The press really seems to be the best, if not the only instrument with which honest men can fight these enemies of order and integrity in government and security in property. . . . American journalism is now but in its feeble infancy; but we have more to fear at present from its good nature, from its subserviency, from its indifference, from its fear to encounter prosecution and loss of patronage by the exposure of the wrong and the exposition of the right. A courageous independence and integrity of purpose, coupled with a fearless expression of truth as to all public individuals, corporations and parties, are the features in its character to be most encouraged.

Initiating Reforms

A healthy discontent with conditions that might be improved is the beginning of reform. The most powerful agency for encouraging such discontent is the newspaper. Rare indeed is the paper that does not claim credit for many improvements in the administration of public affairs. Enemies are made in this way, to be sure. The finest endorsement claimed by a

dynamic newspaper is the hatred of those whose ambition it is to fatten off the public. That the editor will make mistakes; that a sense of power will sometimes beget arrogance; that a personal enemy may sometimes be mistaken for a public enemy—all these are possible, even inevitable; but there can be no doubt as to the net profit to society from this traditional leadership exercised by journalism.

For inspiring historical object lessons in the exercise of this newspaper function, we may study the career of the *New York Evening Post* under the editorship of E. L. Godkin from 1883 to 1900, and the *New York Tribune* when Horace Greeley was using it to fight for the abolition of slavery and intemperance and for other warmly espoused causes.

Serving the Community

Newspapers have always been useful to their communities, but in recent years they have discovered many new opportunities in that direction and have given their best efforts towards a broad and systematic promotion of all community interests. The modern editor is coming to regard himself as an employee of the public with definite obligations in the way of preparing himself to give expert advice on community betterment. In the manifold directions described elsewhere he is a counsellor and an agent for his client, the public. Superimposed upon his ordinary duties of citizenship are his special obligations to supply leadership for the community.

Giving Advice to Individuals

That a newspaper may be useful in answering questions put by individuals, but having general interest, is becoming a recognized fact exemplified in departments of health, general information, housekeeping, etc. Absurdities practiced by a few silly editors do not invalidate the entire policy. A general manager of the *Chicago Tribune* once declared that a woman who conducted an advice department in that paper had received more than fifty thousand letters in two years, and that other similar departments stimulated almost as great response from the public.

Humanitarianism

Even the greatest newspaper sometimes takes a lively interest in a crippled child or a poverty-stricken family or a case of cruelty to animals. A fine tradition of kindness seems to be in the making, not mere sympathy in the abstract but in specific cases by means of which the heart of the public may be touched.

The phenomenal success of Joseph Pulitzer as publisher of the *New York World* is sometimes ascribed to the breadth of his sympathies. Cruelty and oppression in any of its manifold forms roused him to action. In spite of his almost ruthless driving force he was a sentimentalist when it came to appreciation of the needs of the weak and the unprotected.

Printing Propaganda

Perhaps the most recently developed newspaper practice, and one that has aroused more disquietude than any other, is that of admitting to newspaper columns, as if it had been originated by the paper itself, news and even editorial matter prepared by persons in the employ of others.

If the matter submitted is designed merely to keep before the public the name of an institution or an actress or a politician or a department of government, it is described as "publicity matter" and is nowhere regarded as offering any serious menace to public interests. Some city papers use enough of this material to save the expense of two or three reporters, and yet throw away great quantities every day.

But if the matter furnished constitutes a sort of smoke screen under which some organization hopes to operate in safety at the expense of the public—if it is intended to mislead public opinion—it is "propaganda," and by many competent observers, both inside and outside of journalism, is looked upon as the most sinister menace to the integrity and influence of the press.

Specific charges that propagandists for great financial interests have used the press to mislead members of Congress and to deceive and influence state legislatures are made not merely

by individuals but by responsible organizations. "Newspaper editors, in the kindness of their hearts, sometimes lend the use of their editorial columns to their friends," declared a recent statement from the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching, with half-concealed satire painfully damaging to the pride of any self-respecting journalist.

Newspapers that lend themselves to the recognition of this usage have done their utmost to defeat the primary purpose of their support by the public.

Newspaper Enterprise

No tradition of journalism has attracted more admiration than the one exemplified in its almost romantic accomplishments of apparently impossible feats. The history of the press is full of exploits in the day's work of the journalist, calling for endurance, courage, ingenuity, as well as resources in money and influence. Delivery to the United States Senate of a copy of the Treaty of Versailles while Congress was unsuccessfully demanding a copy from the Department of State was a conspicuous modern case. Transmission of unbelievable quantities of cable news in a limited time, delivery of photographs by airplane under difficult conditions, and similar achievements are frequent matters of record. In such manner is much of the newspaper's prestige created.

Business Integrity

While it is true that the business side of journalism should be nothing more than a means of carrying out its professional purposes, the methods employed in that department are of the greatest concern. To the mind of the public the business conduct of a paper represents the true nature of the man or the group back of it. Seldom does a starved paper command respect, or a paper that handles its advertising or circulation in a slovenly manner. This being true, the better business methods that are coming into use in newspaper offices, big and little, argue favorably for the increasing influence of the press, always excepting the incursion of that worldliness which is described as commercialism. Among the principles of better

business in the publishing world, none is more enlightened than the one that stipulates the absolute separation of the business and the editorial departments.

Honest Advertising

The term "honest" may be understood to mean advertising which is truthful and also decent. The files of old newspapers reveal so much of the other kind that the faults of modern advertising shrink into insignificance. Untruthful advertising from the extreme of faking to the mildly deceptive, disgusting and vulgar advertising, ugly advertising, all blot the pages of journalism, but to a less extent to-day than even ten years ago.

Publications which do not explicitly guarantee their advertising nevertheless use much care in assuring themselves that it is reliable.

Known Circulation

Discredit has often been cast upon journalism by the "circulation liar." Indeed the unwillingness of publishers to give a truthful statement of the number of their subscribers became proverbial.

The demands of business for elimination of the uncertainty as to how much circulation a newspaper had to offer advertisers and an increasing shame on the part of publishers at the low rating of their integrity prepared the way for a ready acceptance of means of auditing circulations and an agency for certification of reports showing number and distribution of readers. This agency, the Audit Bureau of Circulations, has achieved results that are important ethically as well as from a practical business standpoint.

Other Modern Tendencies

Some of the present-day tendencies in journalism mentioned by various observers, notably Will Irwin, in *Collier's* and Bruce Bliven, in the *Atlantic*, are:

Greater uniformity or standardization.

Concentration by amalgamation of papers, dictated by the

business office because of the fact that it is little more expensive to manufacture a paper for five hundred thousand readers than for a tenth that many.

The organization in this country of scores of systems of chain-operated newspapers.

The passing of the star reporter through development of local news services using high-speed automatic electric machines with duplicating devices in editorial rooms. The reduction of everything to a machine-like process.

The rising tide of syndicated matter—comics, features, fiction, poetry, editorials, advertisements.

The ascendancy of the afternoon over the morning paper, due to its greater popularity as an advertising medium.

A continuing degeneration and flabbiness of journalistic English.

A tendency to condense news articles into tabloid summaries.

The passing of rivalry from the editorial to the business office.

Perfection of machines employed in writing and manufacturing newspapers—held accountable, by Mr. Bliven, for tendencies towards deterioration.

All of which challenge the interest of observers of things journalistic.

Tendencies discerned through comparison of past and present are suggested by Chester T. Crowell of the *New York Evening Post*, in the following from the *American Mercury*:

The American newspaper of to-day compares with its predecessors about as follows:

It is more useful to the average run of readers than ever before in its history.

It is more accurate.

It is fairer.

It has less imagination, initiative or purpose (barring profit).

It is without equal for honest advertising and is struggling to raise its standard even higher.

It has very little influence and doesn't give a damn.

The quality of its writing grows steadily more sloppy and threatens to reach a point where translation will be necessary.

It is absolutely free of official domination, a fact so generally recognized that no mention would be made of it here except to invite comparison with Europe.

Financial and advertising influence, when exerted upon it at all, usually results in something that is silly rather than sinister.

Several notable characteristics of the modern press, such as independence, institutionalism, willingness to correct errors, good taste, have been mentioned in the discussion of their opposites among the obsolete or obsolescent traditions.

Other Traditions

We have not exhausted the list of "traditions" or usages, but we have considered the principal ones that have had to do, or still have to do, with the relations of newspapers to the public.

Journalism has interesting literary "traditions," so called, with which we are not concerned except in passing. Not a few newspapers take pride in having associated with their history names that are well known in our literature. Bryant, Whitman, Poe, Froude, Whittier, Howells, John Hay, Eugene Field, Richard Harding Davis are some in our own country, and the list is much longer abroad.

Journalism also has glorious traditions in politics, having fought, in the main, on the side of the people against oppression and in favor of greater liberty. Garrison's *Liberator* is only an extreme, and relatively recent, example of the sort of thing that newspapers of differing types have emulated each other in doing since before the middle of the seventeenth century in England.

Journalism has important historic traditions, not only by reason of having exerted leadership in the making of decisions on national or less far-reaching policies, but also because some of its own great men have figured largely in public affairs. Greeley did not become president, but a later journalist did—and where the presidency is concerned perhaps the singleness of devotion required of the journalist may rightly be waived.

Vocational Requirements

There is another group of ideas sometimes called traditions but relating for the most part to the internal affairs of the newspaper office. Such is the long-established rule that a

reporter must make whatever personal sacrifice is necessary to get a story for his paper. He may be injured in a railroad wreck when off duty, but until he has dragged himself to a telegraph office and sent the story he must not think of medical attention for his own hurts. And that is only one actual case of many exhibiting heroic devotion to duty. A reporter must be as loyal to his paper as a doctor is to his patient or a lawyer to his client. He must put its interests first; sometimes he must even place his conscience in its keeping.

Journalism is a vocation full of complexities, and therefore interesting; it is rich in traditions, old and new, good and bad, plausible and contradictory, and in that it is no different from the whole of human life.

CHAPTER XI

NEWSPAPER INDIVIDUALITY AND POLICIES

In our progress from specific problems in journalism to more general concepts, we have tried to understand something of the nature and functions of this human activity, its traditions and usages. These things pertain to the press as a whole. Almost equally important is an examination of the individual newspaper—the constituents which go to make up what may be called its personality, and the manner in which it manifests its controlling purposes.

The criticism has been made, by men whose powers of discrimination should have been more acute, that all American newspapers are alike—as much alike as fruit stands or oil stations; that they are inveterate imitators of each other, lacking the ambition or the ability to develop individuality.

The complaint would, perhaps, be unimportant even if true. It is hard to see that any serious harm would result from a standardization of the press—if the standard followed the lines of the best possible model. About the only damage would be to take some of the spice out of life, since there is no romance in uniformity. It is the great privilege of a journalist to develop individuality in his paper, but it is hardly a requirement of duty to do so.

But the question is an academic one, because the allegation is obviously mistaken. Newspapers differ radically, not only as to their deeper traits of character but also as to such superficial matters as “physiognomy” and “dress.” Their personalities are morally, mentally, and physically distinctive. It is possible to find a greatest common divisor of all newspapers—qualities common to all—but in each case there is a large remainder left, composed of those characteristics belonging to the individual paper.

Charles A. Dana's question, "What kind of a newspaper will you make?" is still pertinent, though his subsequent analysis seems inadequate: "That question may be divided into two parts: will you make a newspaper for sensible people, or will you make a newspaper for fools?" Happily there are several subdivisions of each class.

The great personal journal of the past in the United States was the outward expression of the individuality of the editor, as the personal journal of France and of our own rural communities and smaller cities is to-day. And while modern metropolitan journalism has become institutional, yet many, and perhaps all, so-called institutional newspapers embody the ideas and the ideals of some one man, living or dead. The editor of the *Columbia (South Carolina) State* has presented this idea admirably:

The largest paper in the country, whichever paper that may be, is as true to some definite aura of policy as the smallest one, whose editor owns it, sets the type and brings muscle to bear to turn the press. Every paper that amounts to anything is a "one-man" paper—in the sense that it has somewhere a soul of its own, which no interest can hope to buy without killing it. And this soul is the joint possession of the paper and its readers. For the people who read a paper, and thus make it powerful in business and influence, are those who are lending it its soul. A paper that breaks away from what its subscribers expect of it might as well kill itself, as far as exerting any sort of moral force, and be done with it.

There are plenty of instances in this country where millionaires who knew nothing of newspapers have attempted to buy a journalistic soul with dollars. Every such experiment has been a melancholy failure, where it did not attempt to grow on the old stump the flower of its owner's individuality. It were easy to cite instances of papers that twenty years ago carried tremendous influence, that are now no better than clothing stores, or savings banks, or butcher shops, or other things that the public patronizes because it is used to them. Papers of this sort have not been "sold"—they have been bought by somebody who got the worst bargain in the world.

On the other hand, there is a small group of influential papers in the country whose stock has changed hands several times; whose founders have died; whose master minds have passed away;

that are owned, technically speaking, by soulless corporations; and yet whose spirit still lives in all the vigor and personality of the man or group of men that first lent them life and the blue fire of faith.

Men who make newspapers are scarcely ever thinking about the corporation that owns the plant. They are thinking about the paper itself. They are sensing at every pore what the paper stands for, and they are trying with such skill as they have to deliver the goods. It may be a five million dollar corporation that employs them, but, from managing editor to office boy, they have the vision of the personality of the sheet. They can no more get away from that than a circulation manager can afford to miss a mail.

If the paper has no personality, then you will find a lot of lazy, sneering, pessimistic individuals under the shell of a name that is the paper—most of them longing for another job on a paper where they can get busy and express—not themselves, necessarily, because they are craftsmen who execute orders—but the paper—something that, right or wrong in the particular case, represents something strong and true in the general purpose.

Writing about the same principle, but applying it to a particular newspaper, the editor of the *Chicago Tribune* said:

The *New York Times*, celebrating its twenty-fifth anniversary under the direction of Adolph S. Ochs, merits comment not only for its journalistic success but for its reflection of the intellectual development and capacity of the public which it serves.

As the celebration is that of Mr. Ochs's assumption of the paper's management rather than of the birth of the newspaper, it is fitting to consider it from a personal viewpoint rather than the impersonal. Newspapers have their own personalities. The reading public looks upon them as dull or interesting, reliable or unreliable, comprehensive or cursory, subservient or independent, selfish or altruistic, practical or visionary, as if these qualities were innate, sprung full formed from the presses, typewriters, and desks which make up their physical being.

One seldom hears the editor of a newspaper praised or condemned as an individual. Praise or condemnation is directed against the paper as a whole, as if it were the product of a single mind and a single pair of hands.

The modern metropolitan newspaper, such as the *Times*, is the product of some 2,000 minds and as many pairs of hands. This being the case, it is the more remarkable that such a product can and does take on the character of an individual and reveal that

character so consistently as to develop a personality recognized by its readers, strong in its good qualities, consistent even in its inconsistencies—in short, human.

Perhaps, after all, there is not so great significance in the phrase, "the personal journalism of the past," as we have been inclined to think. If the public now refers to what "the *Times* says," rather than to what "Raymond says," it is nevertheless speaking of a personality—a composite personality, but having one dominating factor. A newspaper, some one has said, is the nearest like man of all man-made things.

The variables that have to do with the creation of distinctive types of newspapers afford interesting material for detailed study. They may be surveyed rapidly from four points of view: (1) the appearance of the paper, (2) its intellectual qualities, (3) its tone or spirit, (4) its moral fibre.

The Newspaper's General Appearance

In the same way that we form first impressions of persons we meet, from their general bearing, their clothes, their neatness or slovenliness, their facial expression, and their manner of greeting us, so we get a feeling for the personality of a newspaper from its typographical dress, its make-up, its pictorial features, the kind of paper it is printed on, and the things it says to us first through its headings.

The first impression may be described by one or more such epithets as: cheap, flashy, smashing, refined, sleek, mild, chaste, vulgar, ornate, sensational, conservative, somber, monotonous, diversified, slovenly, neat, harmonious, orderly, dignified.

If we make a list of the characteristics of a newspaper which lead us to call it flashy, we shall have such items as: colored ink, headings that offend the eyesight by their size and discordant styles of type, big "ears," heads massed on the front page by the device of "jumping over" stories to the inside of the paper—one observer counted in a New Haven paper twenty-nine stories carried over in this way—a hodge-podge make-up sometimes placing banner heads above the name of the paper, pictures chosen for their sex appeal or sensational quality, extra-width columns, crude comics, a "cafeteria"

editorial page, and other ear-marks of haste, confusion, and bad judgment.

If we seek an explanation of the impression of refinement made upon us by some newspapers, we shall note such characteristics as: white paper and black ink, good press-work, liberal margins, a well-proportioned page, approaching in its dimensions the "golden section" of the ancient Greeks, a style of heads that suggests restraint and due regard for news values, harmony of type faces, balance and rhythm in make-up, a minimum of broken column rules, absence of advertising on the front page and the "banking" of advertisements on other pages, judicious departmentalizing, a dignified treatment of illustrations and entertainment features, and other evidences of care and good taste.

In like manner we may enumerate the particulars that go to make up others of the general types mentioned.

A closer acquaintance with the paper, through familiarity with its contents, enables us to form opinions as to the next element which goes towards determining its character and personality.

A Newspaper's Intellectuality

In order to reach a fair judgment here, we shall need to make observations from three standpoints: (1) quality, (2) breadth, (3) proportion. Our observations must include the whole newspaper but will be centered upon the editorial page where the quality of the paper's intellectuality is especially manifest. The editor of the small paper and the staff of editorial writers on the large paper speak daily to the more thoughtful and influential of the paper's readers. Their task is fourfold: to inform, to interpret, to convince, and to persuade. Entertainment is present but incidental. In the manner of their performance they do much to fix the intellectual tone of the paper.

1. The quality of a newspaper's mentality is suggested by such descriptive words as: dull, serious, sane, ponderous, flimsy, penetrating, high-brow, low-brow, sparkling, keen, interesting, stimulating, bigoted, brilliant, pale, clever, smart, powerful, weak, cosmopolitan, exhaustive, intensive.

To some degree these qualities are the product of style in writing. Much has been said in condemnation and much in praise of "newspaper English." It has been described as a flood of corruption flowing into the pure waters of our language; as a course in slang, popularizing barbarous words and eventually forcing them into the dictionaries; as careless, slovenly, inexact. On the other hand, it has received high praise, some of it from the recognized defenders of our speech, characterizing it as the language of the people; the recruiting agency which brings in the new expressions needed by our widening thoughts; the "most vivid and virile English written to-day."

We are not concerned with the controversy further than to note that variations in newspaper personality are partly traceable to style, of which there are many levels between such extremes as that of the *Sun* under Dana and that of the sheet written by an uncultured man attempting journalism after having failed at everything else.

2. The breadth of a newspaper's intellectual interests reflects both the breadth of mind of one man or a group of men behind the paper itself and also the opinions held by the makers of the paper as to the breadth of the intellectual interests of the public which it attempts to serve. Seldom does a newspaper attempt to appeal equally to all sorts of people. It selects its particular public out of the mass. There are newspapers which would rather satisfy the requirements of a comparatively few readers than of the multitude.

Some newspapers that rank high in comprehensiveness do so partly because their financial resources enable them to gather the news from all parts of the earth and to employ specialists in many fields of human interest. This comprehensiveness in turn contributes to their greater prosperity. Other newspapers, however, neglect news sources well within their reach, as, for example, the often observed indifference to farm news by the rural press.

The editor of a popular woman's periodical explains that his success in interesting so many is due to the fact that he has made a chart showing all the interests of women and, in making up the contents of his magazine, he sees to it that

every interest has its satisfaction. Magazines in narrower fields use similar methods. Newspapers, more or less consciously, are built up in the same way. One makes much of a juvenile department; another places emphasis on labor news; another runs an occasional page of genealogical lore; another maintains an exchange department which supplies the paper with literary features; another is strong in financial news or foreign news, or the news of sports, music, art; and still another tries to cover all. The paper that seeks comprehensiveness and the one that specializes are of quite different individualities.

3. The relative amounts of space and emphasis given to different kinds of matter in the newspaper are of the utmost significance. Many statistical studies have been made in this field. A broad classification of the newspaper's contents into the four divisions, news, editorial, entertainment features, and advertising, and a measurement of their relative proportions, presents such variations as the following: a paper usually called sensational contained: news, 33 per cent; editorial, 2; entertainment features, 21; advertising, 44; a conservative paper: news, 54 per cent; editorial, 5; entertainment features, 7; advertising, 34. These two papers reveal strong contrasts but they do not represent extremes in all departments. For example, advertising sometimes occupies three-fourths of the space in a newspaper.

Percentages do not show, of course, whether or not the reader is receiving good measure. The figures giving the number of different kinds of material reveal, in some instances, that the newspaper publishing an extremely high percentage of advertising is, because of its large size, supplying the reader with more column-inches of news than its contemporary having a lower percentage of advertising.

Similar studies have been made of the space devoted to different subjects in the news and editorial columns. The report of one such survey, covering 138 newspapers, contained such items as the following (disregarding fractions): sports, 10 per cent; government, 10; business, 8; finance, 6; crime, 6; politics, 5; education, 4; society 4; noted persons, 3; re-

ligion, 2; literature, 2; agriculture, 2; theatre, 1; benevolence, 1; improvements, 1; weather, 1; less than 1: jokes, household arts, science and discovery, fashion, amusements, invention, divorce, transportation, art. Comparative studies of different newspapers present wide divergence in such percentages. The proportions vary, to be sure, from day to day. Sometimes they are accidentally inflated or diminished.

According to Roger William Riis, writing in the *Independent*, measurements of five copies each of a score of American city dailies, and of a representative group of papers from three foreign countries, resulted in the following percentages for the first seven American newspaper interests:

	America	England	France	Germany
Business.....	21	17	9	30
Sports.....	15	17	3	3
Amusements.....	15	1	21	8
Politics.....	10	9	6	11
Police News.....	10	6	8	3
Foreign News.....	7	23	30	35
Arts.....	4	5	5	3

An English critic said, in writing to American journalists, "Urged as you are by the double obligation of using the matter you receive and using it quickly, you do not compose your paper, you fill it up." The conditions that furnish excuse for such remarks are thus pictured by an experienced managing editor, speaking of the influence of the machinery of production on the newspaper's contents.

If any one could take a completed journal on Monday morning, and with all the available material, used and unused, re-assemble it from the beginning, he could exhibit vastly better judgment as to its contents than appears in an actual newspaper. But this is not the way it is done. It is the running judgment, through the hours of the evening, that must control. The compositors must have a steady stream of copy. If news runs light, a tolerant standard of estimate prevails on the desk. If news, later in the evening, runs heavy, the material once edited, and in type, must ordinarily stand.

Was this story worth a column? It seemed so at eight o'clock, when it was going into type.

Is this story worth only one-eighth of a column? It seemed so at quarter past one, when we realized that every new inch would compel the killing of the matter already in the paper.

Not only is the composition a continuous stream which compels a current judgment as the news pours in, but the making up of the pages and their locking proceeds apace. On pages nearly covered with advertising, it is the aim to fill the spaces as early and as effectively as possible, and then to lock the page for the night.

The standards of judgment as to brevity made at these early hours have to stand. It accordingly happens that one page in a newspaper will often seem edited on a basis of abundant space and another with great penuriousness.

No commodity is more irregular in its flow than news. There is no crop in the world which has big harvests and total failures in more radical and quickly succeeding contrast.

Notwithstanding the correctness of the foregoing explanation, it remains true that, over a reasonable period of time, the proportions maintained in the news are significant. They reveal the mental make-up of the paper and help to distinguish its personality from that of its neighbor.

A Newspaper's Spirit or Tone

Association with a human being soon reveals his prevailing mood, his attitude towards life, his way of going about the day's work. So with the newspaper. After we become acquainted with it, we describe its spirit or tone by such words as: dynamic, pugnacious, optimistic, staid, serene, dictatorial, calm, tolerant, arrogant, placid, oracular, dogmatic, satirical, vehement, scolding, nagging, hysterical, impassioned, jovial, cultured, whimsical, severe, rough, lively, aggressive, enterprising, independent, fearless, militant, subservient, commercialized, visionary, practical, easy going.

The dynamic newspaper—to mention one type—is not satisfied to print the news and the interpretation thereof. It has ambitions to accomplish definite objects. It has the crusading spirit. It likes to “blow the lid off.” It will be found conducting a campaign for better health measures, for pure food, for postal savings banks, for the prosecution of a corrupt politician, for public improvements.

The scolding newspaper, somebody has said, takes the place

of a watch dog in the household; tie it to the table leg and it will growl all night. It is mean-spirited, jealous and unfair.

The enterprising newspaper, given the means, sends a Henry M. Stanley to Africa, or raises funds for a Statue of Liberty pedestal, or sends some messenger and correspondent to an Ireland of civil strife or a Russia of revolution.

The cultured newspaper brings good taste to bear in all things. It approximates the requirements of Newman's famous definition of a gentleman. It avoids undue excitement over trivialities. It speaks much about those things of permanent value in literature, art, and life.

And so, the spirit of each type might be described. Any one who knows American journalism will be able to call to mind examples of each.

It is not always easy for a newspaper to know itself. One great newspaper employs a sort of consul to the port of public opinion whose business it is to find out what the people are thinking and saying about the paper.

Sometimes a newspaper is moved to tell what it thinks of its own spiritual make-up. Such a confession is always interesting. The following was printed as an editorial in the *Kansas City Star*:

Entering its fortieth year to-day the *Star* frankly confesses it doesn't feel its age. It never has quite settled down. Its founder incarnated the spirit of perpetual youth, its curiosity, its zest for adventure, its hospitality to new ideas. William R. Nelson had a very definite program always before him. But if he were once convinced that the particular method he was working on for realizing the program was ineffective, he was perfectly ready to back off and try a new line of attack. An idealist, he was no visionary, no doctrinaire.

This is the spirit the *Star* hopes to maintain as it counts the years. It is glad it is alive at a time like this, so full of tremendous problems. It doesn't believe there ever was a more interesting period in the world's history. It hopes to do its share as one of the factors in making that complex and bewildering thing known as "public sentiment." It feels there never was more occasion than the present to be suspicious of panaceas. Part of its job just now is to call attention to the danger signal:

Stop! Look! Listen!

The *Star* has been brought up in the school of hard knocks. It doesn't mind getting its head broken in a good cause. For from the outset it has always been independent, but never neutral.

It appreciates the forbearance of those of its readers who differ from it in opinion, yet continue to subscribe. It knows it must try their patience sorely at times. But it hopes they are used to it—and besides, it trusts to atone for what they regard as aberrations in policy by supplying them more interesting reading matter than they can get in any other newspaper on earth.

So it makes its bow on this thirty-ninth birthday, feeling fit as a fiddle and hard as nails, and hoping all its numerous family of readers are the same.

A Newspaper's Moral Character

As in human relationships, long and intimate acquaintance is usually necessary to enable us to form a just estimate of a newspaper's moral fibre. When we have done so we characterize it as: yellow, reliable, honest, fair, venal, obstinate, tolerant, persistent, decent, truthful, sincere, considerate, kind, clean, generous, brutal. Such epithets are self-explanatory. They are applied to a paper regarded as a reflector of the real character of the owner or editor or of the group in control. Sometimes this reflection is not wholly true. A newspaper often seems to be better than those in control. Sometimes it seems to be worse. The ethical yardstick is the really significant measure of all journalism.

Looking at Foreign Newspapers

When we study newspapers abroad, we find some American types carried to even greater extremes than at home; other extremes are hardly represented at all; and we find yet other foreign types to which nothing in this country exactly corresponds. We find strange contradictions, such as a staid, conservative, ponderous newspaper in London printing the scandal and indecencies of the divorce court with shamelessness unequalled in our journalism. We find some features that we wish might surmount the wall of nationality between them and us, as American methods and ideals are crossing the boundaries into England.

Everywhere are found diversities in newspaper individuality

—to the end, perhaps, that the fittest may survive and the best possible types of journalism be evolved.

J. St. Loe Strachey, editor of the London *Spectator*, has described seven types of newspaper in English journalism:

1. The newspaper in which the function of selling honest news predominates, and in which the desire to spread particular opinions takes second place. Representative, the *Daily Telegraph*.

2. The newspaper of opinion, such as the *Daily News* and the *Morning Post*.

3. The party organ, like the *Daily Herald*.

4. The newspaper which frankly plays the part of advocate for some society or organization.

5. Judicial journalism, exemplified by the London *Times*.

6. Pure commercial journalism—which really exists for its advertisements.

7. Personal journalism, of which France affords the best examples.

Expression of Newspaper Policies

Editorial policies, whether or not they are explicitly announced, are the working out of the individuality of the paper—the translation of its character into action. Reticence in regard to them is observed by some newspapers while others advertise their convictions and intentions in the form of general “platforms” or statements of specific aims.

Those lesser policies having to do with the production of the paper may be taken for granted, while we look at some of the platforms and the editorial bills of particulars.

For almost a century and a quarter, the New York *Evening Post* has carried at the top of its editorial column the following:

The design of this paper is to diffuse among the people correct information on all interesting subjects, to inculcate just principles in religion, morals, and politics, and to cultivate a taste for sound literature.

The St. Louis *Post Dispatch* prints in its “flag” a platform written by Joseph Pulitzer:

The *Post Dispatch* will always fight for progress and reform, never tolerate injustice or corruption, always fight demagogues of all parties, always oppose privileged classes and public plunderers, never lack sympathy with the poor, always remain devoted to the public welfare, never be satisfied with merely printing news, always be drastically independent, never be afraid to attack wrong whether by predatory plutocracy or predatory poverty.

Such announcements are sometimes condensed into one sentence, like the slogan of the *New York Times*, "All the news that's fit to print," or that of the *New York Tribune*, "First to last—the truth: news—editorials—advertisements," or the *Christian Science Monitor's* "First the blade, then the ear, then the full grain in the ear."

To these representative statements of purpose may be added such pronouncements as the following which the *Providence Journal* printed as an advertisement in a journalistic trade paper:

We are bound to tell the truth as we find it, without fear of consequences—to lend no convenient shelter to acts of injustice and oppression, but to consign them at once to the judgment of the world. It may suit the purposes of statesmen to veil the Statue of Liberty. Governments must treat other governments with external respect, however black their origin or foul their deeds; but happily the press has no such trammels, and while diplomatists are exchanging courtesies, can unmask the mean heart that beats beneath a star, or point out the bloodstains on the hand which grasps a sceptre. The duty of the journalist is the same as that of the historian—to seek out the truth, above all things, and to present to his readers, not such things as statecraft would wish them to know, but the truth as near as he can attain it. Let those who will, preach silence on crimes which they cannot deny and dare not even palliate; we have been trained in another school, and will not shirk from boldly declaring what we freely think.

In connection with a change in ownership, the *Kansas City Journal* printed a front page announcement from which the following are excerpts:

The *Kansas City Journal* and the *Kansas City Post* will not set themselves up bumpiously as self-appointed attorneys for Kansas City.

The efforts of these newspapers will be directed toward print-

ing the facts, in order that the people may reach, and act upon, their individual conclusions.

Newspaper abuse of power is as bad as any other form of tyranny.

Freedom of the press is guaranteed by our constitution, but freedom of the press does not mean newspaper license.

It does not mean license to distort news facts.

It does not mean license to print misleading headlines.

It does not mean license to blacklist citizens.

It does not mean license to assassinate character.

It does not mean license to grab political power.

It does not mean license to manipulate public projects for private profit.

It does not mean license to browbeat advertisers, to attempt to make or break organizations, to ruin socially, politically or in a business way any individual for personal reasons.

The *Journal* and the *Post*, from time to time, will advocate the things believed best to advance the public welfare. But in the final analysis, the public welfare is in the keeping of our citizens. No newspaper's judgment is infallible, and we shall not sulk nor vent our spleen if a majority does not agree with us.

Specific policies are enunciated through such means as "boxed" statements on the front page, editorial announcements, or even posters on the billboards. One newspaper keeps posted in its editorial rooms a list of some sixty "continuing policies" established by its founder. Several papers have issued pamphlets on their policies, entirely separate from their style books. Many declare their purposes in the newspaper trade journals.

At the head of its editorial page, the *Chicago Tribune* prints the following:

Our Country! In her intercourse with foreign nations may she always be in the right; but our country, right or wrong.—
Stephen Decatur.

And just underneath, this platform:

The *Tribune's* Platform for Chicago: (1) Build the subway now, (2) Abate the smoke evil, (3) Abolish Pittsburgh plus, (4) Stop reckless driving.

Following is the *Enquirer's* platform for Cincinnati:

(1) Construction, without delay, of adequate railway freight and passenger terminals, (2) Building of rapid transit system with a workable plan of operation, (3) Extension of boulevard lighting plan, (4) Development of park and boulevard plans, (5) Lessening of the smoke nuisance, (6) Construction of a river-to-lake barge canal, (7) Advancement of Cincinnati's prestige as a national art center.

The Kansas City (Kansas) *Kansan* announces that it stands for:

(1) Equitable freight rates and better railroad service, (2) North and south traffic-way and more cross-town car lines, (3) Industrial and retail trade development, (4) Completion of Seventh Street viaduct, (5) Renewed Northwestern railroad freight and passenger service, (6) Street and road improvements and garbage disposal system, (7) Definite city planning program, civic center, new court house, (8) Public parks and playground equipment for children.

Reiteration of concrete policies tends to keep the paper consistently in line for specified objects—and watchful. For public attention is constantly directed to its position on given issues. But there is much to be said against that unvarying consistency on which this policy seems to rest. On the whole, newspapers are much too loath to change their minds.

Whether or not a paper should advertise its policies seems to be largely a matter of personal preference. But consistency, or the abandonment of it, is a question of honesty and courage. Practice both in regard to adopting and changing policies has much to do with making manifest the character of any newspaper.

CHAPTER XII

NEWSPAPER INFLUENCE, ITS ORIGINS AND OBJECTIVE

Radically divergent views are expressed from time to time on the subject of newspaper influence. Does it exist at all? Is it as great as formerly? Is it increasing or diminishing? Is it good or bad? Is it an important or even a proper function of journalism? How is it established and maintained? These are some phases of the subject that engage the interest of students of the press.

The manner in which public opinion is formed and the laws by which it operates, its characteristics from the standpoint of the so-called mass psychology, and its social and political significance have been treated in authoritative books and articles. The newspapers' part in all this has been the subject of much speculation and of some careful study. But the question is so complex and so elusive that it will no doubt long continue to entice and baffle. If we examine briefly the fact of newspaper influence, its dual nature, the bases on which it rests, the measure of its potency, the directions in which it works, and the technique of its operation, we shall at least have opened the way for further study by those bent on exploring the manner of the newspaper's entrance into the secret places of the human mind.

The Fact of Influence

As to there being such a thing as newspaper influence, the testimony of observers, back through all the decades since newspapers began, is overwhelming. Typical of the scores that might be quoted is this expression by Henry Ward Beecher:

Do you ever stop to think that millions have no literature, no school and almost no pulpit but the press? Not one man in ten

reads books, but every one of us, except the very helpless poor, satiates himself every day with the newspaper. It is the parent, school, college, theater, pulpit, example, counsellor, all in one. Every drop in our blood is colored by it.

And it was not true in Beecher's time, as it is now, that one newspaper and a fraction for every family is printed in this country every day.

But there are not lacking those who insist that newspaper influence is a myth, a superstition, a fiction created by those who profit thereby.

The disagreement arises, as is so often the case, from the presence of one of those trouble-making words that may be used to signify either one of two things. In this case it is the word, "influence."

"Newspaper influence" is an expression that has at least two rather distinct meanings. Strange as it may seem, the person who says that the newspapers have little influence—much less than formerly—and the person who says that the newspapers have great influence—much more than formerly—may not be far apart after all—may both be right. The same thing holds true in specific cases. With respect to almost any newspaper it is possible to hear that its influence is great, or, from another source, that it is less than nothing. Both statements may be approximately true. What is needed to resolve the paradox is a definition of terms.

General or Indirect Influence

According to one use of the word "influence," the press is credited with being a tremendous factor in human affairs through its function as a distributor of information. When viewed in this light its power resembles that of the schools, or, to go to nature, that of sunlight or rain. It is one factor in the process by which change is brought about, but it does not directly produce change. It is a sort of passive agency or means to the end rather than a dynamic, compelling force. Most people seem to agree that, in this sense of the word, the newspapers of to-day are tremendously powerful—more powerful than ever before.

CASE.—A student of journalism found that one issue of a newspaper, picked at random, contained information on more than four hundred topics—persons, incidents, and ideas. A representative number of a newspaper of 1820 contained information on sixty topics.

Comment.—It is not safe to draw the hasty conclusion that the greater scope and bulk of the modern newspaper demonstrates its greater significance in the thoughts of men. The enrichment of the modern school curriculum does not necessarily prove the greater potency of our schools. The whole content of our lives would need to be considered in connection with that question of relative influence. Any attempt to measure the general influence of the press to-day and yesterday would also involve determination of the relative credibility of newspapers in the periods studied, as well as the extent of newspaper distribution—the attention that newspapers received from the people. These interesting questions in the field of historical research await the student of journalism. It is sufficient for the purposes of the present discussion to state, in passing, these conclusions, to be taken for what they may be worth: that people give greater credence to statements of fact in newspapers than formerly; that they are relatively more assiduous readers of newspapers; and that newspapers play a larger part in their thoughts and acts.

The really significant matter presented by this “case” is not the relative potency of newspapers now and in the past, but the absolute potency of the newspaper of the present as a medium of information giving its readers facts as to some hundreds of topics, in each issue. How much of this information is built into the reader’s life? How much of it is merely apprehended for the moment, then lost from mind, leaving no trace?

Theoretically no mental state can be without its effects. Every thought makes emotional steam that presses towards action of the will. Each of us moves in a course which is the resultant of myriad impacts from the present and the infinite past. A super scientist might view one of us as a physicist views the atom in its complex setting of world forces. But we may be permitted to approach the matter here less from

the academic than the practical standpoint. By influence we do not mean merely a logical relation of effect to cause but an appreciable dynamic relation. To be said to influence the reader, a piece of information in a newspaper must modify or remove or reinforce some attitude of the reader's mind or some belief, or must induce or strengthen or weaken or dissipate an emotional state, or must result in actual functioning of the will.

Of the four hundred items in the paper mentioned, possibly fifty made an appreciable impression on any one reader. Perhaps only ten. Not the same ten or fifty in the case of any two readers, especially in view of the fact that in actual practice no reader peruses everything in the paper and no two readers assimilate precisely the same items or articles.

In the case of one reader, an article about heavy travel to Alaska may establish a permanent desire to make that trip. An item about the drowning of children at a seaside resort may reinforce the decision of a timid mother to take the family to the mountains. An account of holdups on the streets of a neighboring city may inspire a decision by the reader to carry little money in his pocket when visiting that place. A story of a bank failure may tend to divert some people's surplus into old stockings or town lots. A story of heroism may double the number of potential heroes in the newspaper's territory. News about people of wealth may deepen discontent. Or, to mention a more stereotyped example, a story from the political world may influence the reader's vote. Foreign news may determine his views on foreign policies and his vote, in case an issue is presented to the voters. Business news may give suggestions for enterprise or investments. News of sports may largely determine what shall be his form of recreation. Much that is found in the modern newspaper has an influence towards educating the reader's tastes. That means affecting his likes and dislikes; and that, in due course, means influencing his actions. And so on *ad infinitum*. Each person's philosophy of life grows, to greater or less degree, from the pages of his newspaper. His thinking and his feeling and eventually his doings have their origins partly there.

Thus it is not difficult to see how, in its capacity as a vehicle

of information merely, the newspaper has tremendous influence in our lives. But it is an influence which must be described as indirect or general. The newspaper supplies information as the product of its organization. Its reporters and headline writers are the real custodians of its influence. Public opinion is its by-product. Information always has dynamic content, but a newspaper may be thought of as indifferent to the possible effects of what it publishes. That is not its concern. It is the medium of transmission merely.

In an agricultural state, an election may be influenced by discontent due to crop failures. A good rain at the psychological moment has been known to change the whole aspect of things political. In that case the rain must be credited with influencing the election, but not directly, as if, out of the clouds, had come a voice counselling support of the optimists' ticket.

The process in the formation of public opinion by this indirect method has been thus described by Chester S. Lord, for thirty-three years managing editor of the *New York Sun*:

The newspaper's greatest influence is not in persuading persons who have learned to think for themselves. It is exercised on that great mass of our population that has no other source of information than the newspapers. In thousands of families not more than two or three books are purchased in an entire year, and these are likely to be books of fiction. Yet few families are without a daily newspaper. Usually one paper only is taken, and how could it happen otherwise than that the household should come to the editor's way of thinking when no other thought than his comes to their attention? This condition applies to people in moderate circumstances, employees, helpers, those who live by physical toil or who do the simplest kind of clerical work. They are easily influenced because they have not been trained to think or analyze for themselves. They depend on the newspaper for information, explanation, suggestion. They have little inclination or time to study with diligence the great questions of the day, and have few or no facilities for doing so in any event. They are not interested in profound argument, but they accept conclusions readily. If the editor be wise he will seek to know what proportion of his readers are of this type.

The average newspaper reader does not think overmuch of what he is reading, but he is highly receptive. His conclusion is likely to be affirmative. It is his nature to believe rather than to

distrust. He is easily led by artful groupings of fact—rather more easily led thus than by argument requiring much thought. There is not time in these strenuous days for the old-fashioned kind of thinking. Quick conclusions are the vogue, and they are not the result of profound thought. Rather are they the result of hasty thought. This is attested by the rush from one party to another by the so-called independent voter, or the sudden dethronement of the public idol, or the restoration of a discarded hero to public popularity.

Direct Newspaper Influence

Sun and rain produce conditions from which effects follow according to natural laws, but a tornado or a flood or a fire gets results immediately and without intervention of a sequence of conditions. This latter is the sort of influence which most people have in mind when they say that the newspaper lacks it. They mean influence of authority. Influence by dictation. They conceive of the old-time personal journalist as dominating his readers through individual prestige which enabled him to say to them "go," and they went. His opinion was their law. His wisdom was the light of their path.

Allowing for the inevitable idealization of the great figures of the past, for the exaggeration of their power as viewed through the lense of time, it yet seems obvious that no modern newspaper has the following of the most popular of newspapers in the era of personal journalism. This notion is incapable of proof, but seems to have gained acceptance generally among journalists. Whether the fact may be explained by the greater intelligence of the public to-day, rendering them less subject to direct influence, or by the emphasis placed on news rather than opinion in the modern newspaper, or by the institutional character of the larger newspapers of the present—whatever the explanation may be—the condition exists. Whether or not a diminution in newspaper influence—direct influence—is a loss to journalism or a loss to society, and in either case, what could be done about it, are highly important and interesting questions. But before approaching them let us consider a few cases of direct newspaper influence and the views of editors concerning them.

CASE.—A newspaper became convinced that the only cure for the evils of its city government was the adoption of the city manager plan. By articles, mostly editorial in character, it compelled attention to the subject, and through continuance of its campaign over a period of years it brought about, or was largely instrumental in bringing about, the desired change.

Comment.—A fairly clear case of the influence of a newspaper's opinions and the supporting arguments. Information useful in educating the public appeared in the news columns but the campaign was predominately editorial.

CASE.—The support by newspapers of draft measures in 1917 has often been referred to as a case in which direct newspaper influence contributed powerfully to the furtherance of National interests.

Comment.—A similar instance was the assistance to the Liberty Loan campaigns rendered by the press through editorial exhortation and enthusiasm. It seems safe to say that at least the greater part of the press influence in these cases was direct rather than accessory.

CASE.—The success of the Washington conference on disarmament is often attributed to the insistence by the press that the proceedings should be public and to the publicity given its deliberations.

Comment.—The claim has been vigorously denied, but seems to have considerable plausibility. Similarly large claims have been made as to the influence of newspapers in the adoption of woman's suffrage, the provision for electing United States senators by direct vote, the adoption of prohibition, and practically all other great public measures. Nothing short of omniscience could determine how much the press had to do with these historic events or how much of its influence was the direct weight of its opinion.

Relative Strength of Direct and Indirect Influence

It seems desirable for the sake of clarifying the problem to trace the distinction between the two main conceptions of newspaper influence, and to hazard an opinion as to which is the more potent.

Indirect influence is subtle and therefore less likely to

arouse antagonism. The facts are presented and the reader is left to draw his own conclusions. Conclusions thus drawn have superior validity for the person forming them. They are his own conclusions. On the other hand, the risk is taken that, for some reason, the reader will not draw any conclusions, or not the right ones. He will not sift conflicting evidence. He will not make the necessary effort to get a comprehensive view of the question. He will form snap judgments and pass on to the next subject. Is it not better, then, to offer him a ready-made opinion that has been carefully thought out, and take a chance at his accepting it?

Direct influence is the result of outspoken, and perhaps courageous, utterance which if judicious and sincere should command respect. But because of a tendency in human nature, to independence or suspicion or downright contrariness, dogmatic statements are likely to be rejected. People do not enjoy being "told." At least, some people do not like it and others pretend not to like it.

CASE.—In the New York City campaign in 1921, the candidate who was overwhelmingly elected mayor was opposed by nine newspapers in that city and supported by two. It was afterwards explained that:

In the first place, despite editorial opposition, the anti-Hylan newspapers gave uncolored news reports of both sides of the campaign. Hylan's speeches, like those of his opponent, were reported accurately and fairly, including the Mayor's most caustic criticisms of the newspapers on the other side. The issues presented by each candidate were given full publicity. In this way the public obtained facts on which to base its decision on election day.

In the second place, more paid political advertising space was used in the newspapers than ever before in a New York City campaign. Hylan and his fellow-Democratic candidates used far more advertising than did the opposing tickets. They concentrated their appropriation in the newspapers most bitterly opposed to them, using space that ranged from full pages to "readers."

Comment.—*Editor and Publisher* declared that,

In the old days such a preponderance of editorial opposition—

and the circulation ratio was two to one against Hylan—would have meant the certain defeat of any candidate for public office.

It was a clear cut demonstration that the people are coming more and more to read newspapers for the news and the facts on which to base their own judgment rather than accepting editors' opinions. They are relying more and more on the news columns and advertisements to give them these facts.

CASE.—During a recent national political convention a candidate for president protested vigorously because of a news story purporting to show that his delegates were leaving him. He would have been less exercised by an editorial in the same paper urging his delegates to abandon his camp. In some cases, at least, facts in the news columns are more potent than opinions in the editorial page. An account of a fuse firer's daily tasks, some one has said, would have more influence than any number of editorials arguing that he ought to be better paid for his dangerous work.

Comment.—One advantage of direct methods in the editorial columns is that iteration is possible as it is not possible in the news columns. And it sometimes seems that half the potency of the advocacy of any measure lies in endless iteration, just as it constitutes the secret of the effectiveness of much advertising.

So it seems there are advantages in both means by which a newspaper exerts influence. Probably the sun-and-rain method has more to do with human affairs than the earthquake-and-cyclone method. But each is compatible with the other and one of the joys of the profession of journalism comes from making the best use of both methods.

The question suggests itself as to which kind of newspaper influence it is for which the advertiser is willing to spend vast amounts of money. His judgment surely would be worth considering. At first thought one would say that he buys the indirect influence. The newspaper is merely a means of transporting his announcements to the public, with something added for prestige due to the paper's reputation for printing only honest advertising and the general credibility of anything that it prints in its columns. But the known care of any particular newspaper in respect to scrutinizing its advertising amounts

to a direct endorsement of the advertiser and accounts for the higher rate he is willing to pay. Moreover any advertiser would be willing to pay handsomely for explicit editorial endorsement if such could honorably be obtained. Endorsement of a book by a well-known column conductor is said to be worth more to the publishers than many advertisements. Some of the scandals of journalism have resulted from purchase of a newspaper's direct influence.

Influence through "Campaigns" or "Crusades"

A newspaper crusade is an undertaking in which direct influence is sought to be exercised for a specific object and sometimes in a spectacular manner. In politics it is an attempt to arouse the mass of indifferent voters through emotional appeal—the emotions in this case being such opposites as hate and love, gratitude and revenge, self-sacrifice and cupidity, admiration and contempt.

In civic matters, crusades are usually aimed at improvements of a public nature and are designed to dissipate, for the time being, the normal inertia of the community.

The technique of a crusade is simple. It must be preceded by such educational work as may be necessary to prepare the way for a favorable attitude on the part of the public. In other words, the major premise must be well established, the principle involved must be clarified. Then the most favorable angle of approach to the specific proposition must be discovered—for example, shall the newspaper be in the foreground or kept out of sight? Decision must be made as to whether or not the campaign is to be personal. If not, the climactic form of the educational process must be worked out. But if individuals are to be "cast" in the characters of the evils attacked or the good sought, they must be selected, and mobilization planned with them in view. Honest appraisal must be made of the forces that may be depended on to help and of those in opposition that may be won over, frightened into line, or defeated by frontal attack. Then the first gun is fired and the action begins. The advance must not be too fast. Alienation of forces here and there must be guarded against. Tact must

be combined with force. Perhaps the military figure describes the proceeding less appropriately than the favorite one of salesmanship. After victory has been won, it is necessary to decide whether the newspaper shall crow or cackle or keep still.

It is all very interesting. It is often productive of good. It lends romance to an already fascinating vocation. It suggests the professional services rendered by a good trial lawyer to his client, or by an aggressive minister to his church. Conducted in the professional spirit for beneficent ends, it is the finest fruition of the journalist's career. It is *creative journalism*.

Many notable cases of newspaper crusading, past and present, might be described; but it will suffice here to mention the purposes accomplished in a few instances:

Exposure of the Tweed Ring frauds.

Raising funds for the lighting of the Statue of Liberty.

A famous campaign against get-rich-quick concerns in New York.

The sensational investigation of insurance companies.

Campaign against election frauds.

The campaign for pure foods.

Reform of an inefficient police department.

Campaign for Postal Savings Banks.

Adoption of city planning and zoning.

Changes to more modern forms of city administration.

Withdrawal from business life of a prominent man convicted of immorality.

Adoption of the sane Fourth.

Elimination of dishonest and indecent advertising.

Suppression of race track gambling.

Sources of a Newspaper's Influence

In considering newspaper individuality a sufficiently complete survey has been made of the characteristics affecting the impressions, initial and permanent, made by a paper on its readers—the physical, intellectual, volitional and moral qualities that enter into the personality of a newspaper, as of a man. Due allowance is to be made for the exceptional cases in which an

unkempt newspaper—ill-shaped page, narrow columns, worn type, bad presswork, garish colors, crude make-up, messy pictures, obtrusive advertisements, exaggerated type faces—may, by reason of intellectual or moral compensations, exert, as may a man of the same sort, a notable influence. Or for another sort of exceptional case in which an intellectually defective newspaper—poorly written news, ill proportioned news, silly features, thin or dull editorials, ill-informed criticism—may, because of its neat appearance or its admirable spirit, gain a surprising hold on its public. Or for the paper that makes up for a lack of dynamic purpose by a certain disarming cleverness. Or for the one that disguises its lack of moral stamina by a certain persuasiveness of editorial expression or by its eagerness to render services to its individual readers or its community.

The investigator of the sources of newspaper influence must needs take into account such matters as the background of the institution: age, importance, competition, business success, ownership, personnel of staff, location in state or city or town, site and appearance of building, business standing and methods, size of circulation, amount and kinds of advertising. Such things count towards establishing a certain reader attitude.

These sources of influence are manifold and their evaluation is a matter too complex to be undertaken with any expectation of arriving at exact measurements. But a few outstanding considerations, often emphasized by journalists and by the critics of journalism, may be mentioned by way of emphasis.

The influence exerted by a newspaper is conditioned partly on the newspaper's performance and partly on the attitude of the readers, for which attitude the newspaper may or may not be responsible. The readers of any given newspaper may, for example, be peculiarly susceptible, or the opposite, to influence by their newspaper in some direction because of the weather, the conditions of the crops, the state of the public health, general financial conditions, or some other matter beyond the control of the paper. This fact, and others similar, complicates the problem beyond hope of any exact determination. But not all the conditions controlling newspaper influence

are accidental. Some of them are well within the sphere of deliberate planning by the judicious publisher.

Confidence of Readers

At the bottom of the whole matter is reader confidence—confidence in the ability, the fairness, the sincerity, and the unselfishness of the newspaper.

CASE.—A successful publisher thus expressed a prevailing opinion concerning a great city daily in his vicinity:

I have wondered sometimes if this great newspaper were drifting into a policy that might presage the sacrifice of its predominance; whether or not it hasn't neutralized its power and influence by its non-partisan partisanship and the bitterness and extremity of its methods to defeat the evils it has so consistently fought—sometimes permitting hatred to warp its judgment.

I don't believe a word of the accusations of pecuniary interest we hear urged against the paper or the individuals connected with it, in every campaign. I am sure that no money motives have ever actuated it in any attitude it has taken on any public question. But it has seemed to me to have sometimes permitted itself to be prompted by prejudices into activities that have alienated the support of, or discouraged the coöperation of, many whose help is needed for the accomplishment of the good things it has always striven for. Bitterness and animosities have been unnecessarily engendered, making impossible a maximum of strength in support of the good causes for which it has fought. And yet it is one of the greatest newspapers in the world, and is so recognized in both America and Europe.

Comment.—Aggressiveness and fairness, combativeness and tolerance seem to be almost incompatible. In this case nobody questioned the ability of the paper and few doubted the sincerity of its beliefs; but everybody challenged its fairness—hence its credibility—and many felt that it was actuated by a selfish love of power and dictation.

CASE.—A city paper had a reputation among newspaper men and others of handling its news without prejudice. Its editorial page was ably conducted. Nevertheless it was not successful. Its owner was connected with a public service corporation. It accepted much doubtful advertising in the effort to make both ends meet.

Comment.—Rightly or wrongly, the people felt that the paper was not disinterested in public affairs. Even a newspaper demagogue seems to have a better chance for public favor than a paper that seems indifferent to the people's interests.

CASE.—A group of newspapers advertised as follows in a trade magazine:

The newspaper which a man is ashamed to take into his home has little value for advertising purposes. It is quickly glanced through for its sensational features and then thrown away. The paper which is most effective as an advertising medium is the one which has the confidence of its readers. Long years of experience have convinced the public of the honesty of these publications and their readers receive your advertising message in a believing frame of mind.

Comment.—The foregoing statement is not more true of the influence of advertising than of the influence of other parts of a newspaper. Respect for the moral standards of a paper is a prerequisite of reader-responsiveness—and this is said with full cognizance of the fact that newspapers achieve circulation through nastiness carefully disguised under innocuous headings or hypocritically justified as public service. Any psychologist who can measure the degree of the reader's "believing frame of mind" can also measure the newspaper's influence.

CASE.—The leading newspaper in an Eastern state had an unusual record of defeats in politics: its candidate for the presidential nomination was eliminated, the candidate it subsequently supported in the election was unsuccessful, its choice for governor of its state and for mayor of its city were rejected at the polls. In fact, through a series of years, it never seemed to be on the winning side. Its competitor issued a lengthy statement setting forth these facts and claiming that "vicious and unreasonable assaults and frenzied campaign methods" were responsible for public distrust, coupled with the alleged fact that the paper in question had made a "bogus ownership statement," and exaggerated claims as to its advertising and circulation.

Comment.—The testimony of a rival need not be taken at face value, but the fact that repeated defeats invite an attack on

prestige should be recognized. The public admires a winner, other things being equal. Instances in which the newspapers in a city, united behind a candidate, have been decisively defeated compromise seriously the public's regard for newspaper leadership.

CASE.—A small-town newspaper advocated street extensions and paving into a residence addition promoted by a speculator in real estate. It was subsequently shown that the editor had an interest in the project. His disinterestedness in any matter advocated by him was thereafter a matter of doubt.

Comment.—The small newspaper and its editor and owner are virtually two terms of an equation. The influence of the one is the influence of the other, with some small allowance for the "psychology of print,"—the prestige of the printed page—and for the fact that people recognize that a man's newspaper is the man at his best. In this instance perhaps water does rise a little higher than its source.

Success in business is also favorable to a publisher's influence unless there is question as to his business methods. A man who is a failure in his own business loses his license to discuss authoritatively the public business—a harsh fact, sometimes, but difficult to set aside.

Good Will of Readers

We do much to oblige those whom we like. Admiration or affection warms us to a point at which response to the influence of the person admired is easy. It is difficult to heed the advice, however wise, of the person we dislike. The same holds true of our newspaper, large or small. A friendly, fair, agreeable, tolerant newspaper can lead us far, provided its wisdom and its sincerity are established in our minds. We may fear a sarcastic or cynical paper; we may respect an austere or domineering paper; we may enjoy a humorous sheet; we may hate a growling, nagging organ of discontent. None of them will have much influence over us in competition with a publication that manifests what we regard as agreeable human qualities.

CASE.—A newspaper that conducts many personal service departments is convinced that one result of the thousands of contacts, by mail, with its readers is an enlarged influence of the paper in all lines.

Comment.—If the thousands of letters received by the various departmental editors are answered to the satisfaction of the inquirers, a strong attitude of good will should result. But is it true that all or even most of the advice given is satisfactory? And how about the readers who look upon such departments as cheap or mawkish? It is safe to say that the business of giving advice can easily be overdone. It does not always lead people to say "my" paper rather than "the" paper.

With respect to the contacts and reciprocal relations with readers, one publisher says: "One of our largest assets is the friendliness of the readers and this is best developed by features which give readers a chance to write their opinions or conjectures. Guessing contests and other contests are of this sort." Prizes for names, missing titles, etc. are variations of the same idea. Of some seventy newspapers questioned on the subject, practically all declared that, "Whatever draws the newspaper and its readers closer together is valuable," or, "A personal response by a reader makes him feel a personal interest in the paper," or, "The ideal relationship is that the reader should look upon the newspaper as a friend. This is best brought about by encouraging reader response in one way or another."

CASE.—A periodical advertised that its aim was to afford its readers the opportunity of "crossing swords with it once a week" to the end that it might contribute to "a purposeful, instructed, articulated public opinion."

Comment.—An admirable objective but an unfortunate figure to describe the means of reaching it. At least it does not suggest the wielding of much editorial influence. Provocation to antagonism may be zestful sport but it is surely less productive of editorial influence than the spirit of "come, let us reason together."

CASE.—The *Detroit News* at one time had two men going out among its readers asking criticisms of the paper and

finding wherein it fell short. One man went directly, every day, to persons mentioned in the news stories and inquired if there were any inaccuracies, any unfairness. The idea was not to wait for the complaints but to proceed aggressively to the business of creating and preserving good will.

Comment.—Similar survey work has been done by other newspapers in the effort to find out what people thought of the paper, its faults, its meritorious features, its value to the community, its influence. The testimony given by executives of such papers has usually been that these surveys resulted in enhancement of the newspaper's strength and popularity, in spite of some baffling conflicts of testimony by readers.

CASE.—The *Chicago Tribune*, smarting under the criticism of Oswald Garrison Villard, editor of the *Nation*, who described it as the world's worst newspaper, invited its readers to tell what they thought of it, in letters of five hundred words. It printed each day the letter it regarded as the best and gave the writer a prize of \$25.

Comment.—Not a bad way to handle the situation.

CASE.—A newspaper publisher attributed his dominance in his field to the fact that he had always boasted judiciously of every achievement. He gave due publicity to material success, as evidenced by increased circulation and advertising and added equipment. He described each wonderful achievement of the press association which served him and the enterprise of his own reporters. By building up respect and admiration, he built up good will.

Comment.—There is no doubt that the influence of the press is furthered by the wonderment people feel at its more spectacular achievements. The magnitude of the machinery for gathering and printing the news is not a little impressive. Inventive skill, enterprise, and speed still have power to thrill as they are developed in a newspaper's broad reach for materials and almost equally broad distribution of its finished product. It all spells prestige, and prestige spells influence.

Receptivity of Readers

A newspaper which has won the confidence and good will of its readers has insured receptivity and responsiveness which

are the forms or manifestations of influence. At the foundation of all confidence or receptivity is the established credibility of the paper—its reputation for desiring accuracy and truth. Next to this is confidence that the newspaper knows what it is talking about—is authoritative.

CASE.—Newspapers often “fall for” some irresponsible scientist who enjoys publicity and who supplies remarkable stories of discoveries likely to be revolutionary in their effects.

Comment.—The influence of newspapers with men of science seems to be inconsiderable. General skepticism seems to have been induced by lack of judgment in respect to scientific news. Receptivity is at low ebb.

CASE.—George S. Johns, resident editor of the *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*, has related how for years that paper exposed and fought boss rule and corruption in municipal and state government. At one time it printed information of the sale of a franchise for \$1,250,000, giving the names of the men involved in the deal. Ring rule prevented action by the grand jury at the time. It was several years before prosecutions were begun; but finally public sentiment, under fearless leadership, brought about a house cleaning.

Comment.—Receptivity and response are not always prompt. There is a cumulative effect of newspaper influence as in case of other forces. Education is a slow process. Persuasion is not always equal to the inertia encountered.

Injudicious demands are sometimes made upon the receptivity of the public. A newspaper may grow impatient and defeat its purposes. The editor moves quickly to a conclusion and expects equally prompt consideration and decision by his readers. Large bodies of people cannot often be swung in that manner. Hysteria sometimes does it—the mob spirit; but results in that case are not usually constructive.

CASE.—An editor in an anthracite coal district undertook to compel the coal-owning interests of his county to pay taxes on valuations adequate to insure decent civic government, education, sanitation, roads. His fight extended over a period of thirty years, being finally rewarded by victory when the editor was sixty-seven years old.

Comment.—An example of the “staying qualities” of some editors who accept commissions as champions of public justice.

Difficulty of Making Measurements

The complexity of the problem of newspaper influence resides in the fact that it has two unknown quantities, two variables, two groups of imponderable factors. One is the source of the power—the newspaper itself—the other is the objective, the recipient, the reader. The nature, amount, and direction of the influence is determined at the receiving end. It depends on what is latent in the reader, his knowledge, temperament, ideals, philosophy, conditions of life, and numberless other circumstances.

No one would undertake reducing the subject to the form of an exact science. Approximation is the best that can be hoped for. Reasoning *a priori* we can proceed from our knowledge of the nature of the press and our understanding of the nature of human beings to some conclusion as to what will happen when the two are brought in contact under given conditions. But at best we are engaged only in a sort of glorified guesswork.

Or, we can proceed inductively from the human angle, studying effects, in the form of response to newspaper influence, and endeavoring to trace them to their causes. We can ask people to tell us when and how and why they have been influenced by a newspaper or when and why and how they have resisted being so influenced. We can subject them to questionnaires and instruct them in the ways of self-examination. They will do their best for us, groping doggedly along shadowy pathways of causation, from some concrete act, such as a vote cast against a constitutional amendment, to the half-realized sources of the purpose and the feeling responsible for the act. Usually the bloodhounds of introspection lose the scent in some black bog of the unconscious; but occasionally they arrive confidently at a newspaper's door.

Once in a while a witness will testify that he never “caught fire” except from spontaneous combustion, but even in such

case the combustion usually appears to have started in a pile of newspapers. Any fairly keen observer of himself can at least tell us to what extent the newspaper determined his thoughts during a given day, what he talked about, what he *felt* about. Perhaps he can tell in what ways his day would have been different if the world he lived in had been newspaperless.

All this is not very scientific, not very exact, but it is the best that investigators have been able to do and it at least gives food for thought.

Not infrequently we are offered evidence as to the impotence of the press. James Schermerhorn, formerly a Detroit publisher, points to the adoption of prohibition and of woman's suffrage as two movements which he thinks were won without any considerable coöperation from the press. He also calls attention to the newspapers' diffidence in promoting sex hygiene, their failure to keep corrupt men out of office, to supplant industrial strife with industrial democracy, to further world peace, to supplant war hatred by a spirit of conciliation.

More often, unfavorable criticism is aimed at positive evils alleged to result from destructive or antisocial forces let loose by the press—international distrust, class antagonisms, morbid curiosity, indifference to social and political evils, mutual suspicion of motive.

To attempt a mathematical formula for the problem, we may say that influence equals credibility plus forcefulness divided by prejudice plus inertia.

If, for example, a man throws open the door of your house and cries "fire!" his influence is likely to be great—not his own personal influence, but the influence of his message. If his credibility is discounted by the fact that you know him for a great practical joker, coupled with the added fact that it is the first day of April, you may not act quite so energetically. If his manner of speaking lacks something of sincerity, you may even continue to sit in your rocking-chair. The quotient of his credibility and forcefulness divided by your prejudice and inertia is zero.

Main Avenues of Influence

One direction in which newspapers are reputed to exert influence is in acquainting public men with the state of public opinion on any question of the hour.

CASE.—Typical of the testimony of public men generally is this sentence from a letter written by a member of Congress:

Newspapers have a large part in enabling men in public life to estimate public sentiment. For twenty years I made it a rule to read the papers from my district and especially to read the news as given by the country correspondents covering public gatherings, meetings at which resolutions were adopted, etc.

Comment.—Indirect influence, but none the less important. Similarly, many interests depend upon the newspapers, and upon direct answers to questions sent to editors, to forecast the probability of legislation on some subject. A survey as to public sentiment respecting laws to restrict or prohibit the use of tobacco in some form, accurately forecast the passage of such laws in Utah and the repeal of similar laws in three other states.

As to the direct influence of newspapers on public officials, testimony reveals all possible shades of opinion. Most legislators enter indignant denial that they allow newspapers to influence them, but at the same time insist that this fact is to be regarded as confidential. Open denunciation or disparagement of newspapers is uncommon. On the other hand, appreciation of the press as an organ of public opinion is often heard on public occasions and occasionally in private. A letter typical of many from politicians says:

The extent of the influence of newspapers depends on circumstances. I have run for office when all the papers opposed me and also when they all favored me—and been elected both times. I can't see that it made any difference. I think newspapers have more influence in other directions than in politics. They are less accurate in politics and the people know it.

Discussing this question, Chester S. Lord has said:

To-day the newspapers, with their simultaneous publication all over the continent, their fast printing and quick delivery, keep

all the people instantly informed. They are able immediately to reflect public opinion, thus making themselves indispensable to the Government. Vast though our distances may be, we have the healthiest kind of public spirit and response. The sentiment of the nation is at the Government's disposal in a jiffy.

This was strikingly illustrated after one of President Wilson's intimations to Germany that unconditional surrender must be a condition of armistice. The same edition of a New York newspaper that contained the President's declaration also contained comments on that declaration made by more than two hundred different publications from Maine to California, and every one of them insisted on unconditional surrender. The President knew instantly that the people were with him.

For very many years it has been the practice of governments—and yet more persistently the practice of political leaders—to put out feelers through the press. A new policy, a questionable nomination, a new plan of taxation, may be contemplated. The Government seeks to feel the pulse of the people on its desirability. Hints are given to the Washington correspondents that the policy or the plan has been suggested and is under consideration. The correspondents pass it along to their newspapers, well fortified with those stale old prefixes, "It is said that," or, "Rumor has it that," or, "A person high in authority who does not wish to be quoted hints that," and so on—giving an outline of the proposed action.

This is followed by another feeler passing out a little more information, saddled also on some fictitious persons. On any important question the public flashes a quick response. The proposal in Washington, for instance, to double the tax on theater tickets and admissions to places of amusement drew a howl of disapproval that defeated the plan. The people didn't want their pleasures taxed additionally.

The conclusions of so wise an observer as James Bryce are worthy of consideration. The summary of his views as to the influence of the press on the workings of popular government is stated as follows in his *Modern Democracies*.

Universal suffrage has immensely increased the proportion of electors who derive their political views chiefly or wholly from newspapers.

The causes which enable newspapers well managed, and commanding large capital, to drive weaker papers out of the field, have in all countries reduced the number of influential journals, and left power in comparatively few hands.

The influence upon opinion exercised by a great newspaper as

compared with a prominent statesman or even with the debates in legislative bodies, has grown.

Newspapers have become more and more commercial undertakings, devoted primarily to their business interests.

The temptations to use the influence of a newspaper for the promotion of pecuniary interests, whether of its proprietors or of others, have also increased. Newspapers have become one of the most available instruments by which the Money Power can make itself felt in politics.

The power of the press is a practically irresponsible power, for the only thing it need fear (apart from libel suits) is the reduction of circulation, and the great majority of its readers, interested only in business and sport, know little of and care little for the political errors or tergiversations it may commit.

Press power is wielded more effectively through the manipulation and suppression of news than by the avowed advocacy of any political views. It is more dangerous in the sphere of foreign than in that of domestic policy, and is one of the chief hindrances to international goodwill.

Democratic government rests upon and requires the exercise of a well-informed and sensible opinion by the great bulk of the citizens. Where the materials for the formation of such an opinion are so artfully supplied as to prevent the citizens from judging fairly the merits of a question, opinion is artificially made instead of being let grow in a natural way, and a wrong is done to democracy.

A distinguished newspaper correspondent, Philip Gibbs, writing in the *Saturday Evening Post* has thus expressed his view of the power of the press in the education of nations:

The easiest way of educating the mass mind of Europe would be by the power of the press. If for a single month the newspapers of Europe could, by some miracle, devote themselves to telling the plain truth of what another war will be, and how easily the interests and burdens of each nation could be readjusted and reconciled by a little give and take, to the vast advantage of all of them, with a simple plea for the comradeship of all common folk across the frontiers in the spirit of Christian charity, there would be a tremendous, an emotional, a joyous response from hundreds of millions of humble men and women.

The press by united propaganda could lift up the very heart and soul of Europe to a new vision of justice. It is the most powerful machine for the transmission of ideas and knowledge existing in the world to-day. But it is a machine directed for the most

part in Europe by men of low morality, corrupt interests, political cunning and ambition, and narrow minds. It is not a truth-telling power, but, with some honorable exceptions, a machine of prodigious energy and influence devoted at the best to half truths, limited aspects of truth, careful economies of truth; and at the worst to lies, faked news, faked facts and figures, wicked, unashamed treachery to the ordinary standards of honor and fair play.

Newspaper Influence on Taste

An advertisement of a newspaper, having distinguished traditions going back two generations, expresses the idea thus:

"Evil communications corrupt good manners." So runs the old saw. It means that if you spend too much time with low-brows you are likely to become a trifle depressed in the forehead yourself.

All of which has to do with newspaper companionship, for reading one newspaper regularly is actually being in the mental companionship of that group of editors, writers, and artists.

You can no more escape the influence of their thinking and character than you can escape the effect of the air you breathe, be it pure or polluted.

Do not deceive yourself into thinking that this influence is a light matter. It is quite the opposite.

For the grown person this influence is important, while for the young the association with men and women of intelligence in daily life is no whit more desirable than meeting good mental society in the newspaper. Good taste and good judgment are either fostered or lessened by the companionship which your children find in their newspaper.

And in another advertisement in the same series, the subtle character of this influence is described as follows:

The real, ever-present, always-working power of the press is one of the most intangible of influences. It is not seen or touched or heard. It is not even consciously exercised in the daily work by the great majority of men who form the press.

Men, women, and children who read are not conscious of the influence and would deny it if questioned.

But they can no more get away from the influence of their newspapers than they can get away from the influence of their homes, their businesses, their friends, or their habits. The tone of the newspaper you read is as important a factor in moulding your life as any of these.

In Cities and in Small Towns

Discussing the fields of influence open to large and small newspapers, Chester S. Lord may again be quoted:

In the big cities the editor knows the quality of mind he is addressing better than does the writer in smaller communities. In New York, for instance, every sheet has a different clientele. Everybody knows which newspapers by reason of their scholarly editorial articles, criticisms, reviews and nonsensational news appeal to the highest intelligence. And every one knows the ones that appeal to the non-thinking public. But in smaller towns the newspaper goes to the wise and the unwise alike. The task of pleasing everybody requires study, and here editorial writing becomes an art indeed. The scholar may sneer at the article that pleases the man of toil, and both may despise the suggestion that convinces the man of medium intelligence.

The editor of scholarly instincts naturally wants to please the highest intelligence among his readers, but the readers who really think in a scholarly way are few. The great proportion of readers care little for so-called polite literature; neither do they care for profound instruction. They want the simpler sort of editorial comment and are better pleased with that which explains than with that which argues. They want their news adorned with breath-catching headlines in big type.

The opinion may be ventured that in respect to its general influence—educational, unifying, socializing—the small paper is quite the equal of its larger contemporary; but that in direct influence it is inferior. Its opinions on national or international questions do not have authority based on special knowledge, and its views on state or local matters have little more weight than the views of one man. Its influence in directing attention to a given subject is perhaps more vital than in forming opinion upon it.

Nevertheless the increasing numbers of small papers which are abandoning the editorial page are following a regrettable policy. True, the editor of a small paper is a busy man; true his editorial work is often done in slipshod fashion; true his readers are primarily interested in local news items; but should a man worthy to be a newspaper publisher relinquish the opportunity to exert a direct editorial influence? Should he cheerfully "scrap" a great tradition of his vocation? Should

he be content to merchandise information when he might accomplish something as interpreter and guide?

Waning Authority of Newspapers

The opinion that the power of the press is waning comes often from within the profession itself. Writing in *Everybody's Magazine* of "The American Newspaper," George Creel, chairman of the committee on public information during the World War, said:

Measured in terms of power, the press has not half the influence it had in the days when "extras" were unknown, and when editors recognized their high responsibilities. Election after election proves conclusively that the press is not the controlling factor that it believes itself to be or that timorous politicians imagine. And the reason is that newspapers are too close to themselves and too far away from people. The press employs none of the keen laboratory methods to which other industries turn more and more. Unlike every other selling organization, it makes no effort to study its trade in order to find out what it needs or what it wants.

The case for the editorial is no better than that for the news column. One can count on the fingers the editorial pages of the country that carry weight. And there are good reasons. For the most part, the average run of editors "den up" in their sanctums, either spinning out of themselves like so many silkworms, or else penning condemnation or approval based upon facts that another man has gathered and into the truth of which they have not inquired. They are the victims of self-induced paralysis, they avoid the living stream, and slosh around in the backwaters of life.

An English view by "K. P." is that,

The extent to which the public is really influenced is hard to determine. That the press trust has a following is evident. On certain occasions, as for instance at elections, it may be decisive. An illustration of this is the victorious campaigns which the *Daily Mirror* has on two occasions waged against the Conservative candidates in one of the London districts. A large and centrally directed group of papers, mobilized for a limited purpose, and developing all its allied publicity machinery, can admittedly stir public opinion for the moment.

On the other hand, it is uncertain whether this influence is more than momentary. There are many indications that the popular press in our day has only the lightest hold upon its readers and

that in any case it makes no continuous contribution to the formation of public opinion. The great electoral successes of the British Labor Party, won without help from the press, seem to show that the voting masses are to a great extent immune to newspaper agitation.

The lessening of newspaper authority is explained by some as due partly to the growth of the movies and the development of radio. Also to the greater number of publications and the consequent mixture of voices; and to the diminished amount of reading done on account of the attractions outside the home accessible through the automobile.

Much has been written regarding the supposed loss of faith in newspaper credibility as a result of the mobilization of the press for strategic purposes during the war. The public learned many lessons in skepticism. What the armies learned is described by an English writer, C. E. Montague:

They felt they had found the press out. The most bloody defeat in the history of Britain, a very world's wonder of valour frustrated by reckless misuse, of regimental glory and staff shame, might occur on the Ancre on July 1, 1916, and our press come out bland and copious and graphic, with nothing to show that we had not quite a good day—a victory really. Men who had lived through the massacre read the stuff open-mouthed. Anything, then, could figure as anything else in the press—as its own opposite even. Black was only an aspect of white. With a grin at the way he must have been taken in up to now, the fighting soldier gave the press up. So it comes that each of several million ex-soldiers now reads every solemn appeal of a government, each beautiful speech of a premier, or earnest assurance of a body of employers with that maxim on guard in his mind, "You can't believe a word you read."

If it appears that the romance of the old journalism has departed from us and that the newspaper leadership of our day is less dramatic than in the seemingly more picturesque past, shall we regard the change with apprehension or with complacency? Surely the latter, both from the standpoint of journalism and of society, for the old leadership, however dynamic, was not more intelligent than the new, nor more unselfish. As for issuing orders to its readers and having them obeyed, a

modern newspaper may be relatively impotent—modern journalism may have lost something—yet in other ways it wields more influence than ever before. In so far as the attractiveness of the profession of journalism lies in its opportunities for power, the profession was never more inviting to ambitious youth than at present.

Comparison of the power wielded by a newspaper and that of a statesman is an engaging undertaking but practically impossible of determination. The struggles between the Northcliffe press and Premier Lloyd George are historic but not illuminating. Public opinion is so volatile that one wonders if it does not sometimes reverse itself from one day to the next.

Another question that has been raised by students in the field of comparative journalism is the relative potency of the influence of the press in this country and in others. Obviously there is lacking to us whatever prestige accrues to a press that is known as official or semi-official, but likewise whatever discredit comes to a press known to be subsidized or controlled. We lack any great national newspapers such as are possible in smaller countries, but a degree of unity results from the development of our great news gathering and disseminating organizations. Newspaper influence penetrates more thoroughly in our country than in those having large masses of illiterates. Our public is more homogeneous.

Influence of the Foreign Language Press

From time to time attention is drawn to the existence in this country of a foreign-language press exerting more or less influence on special nationalistic or racial groups. In time of war it is seen as a menace. Even in time of peace utterances such as the following occasionally get into print:

Through this foreign press, which controls millions who read nothing else, they are herded together for common action in political, social and economic affairs. They are mentally clubbed into line, and have been trained for centuries to obey without independent thought. The publication offices of these newspapers are factories, where anti-American opinion, concepts, and propaganda are manufactured. Through them, there pours into this country a flood of enemy alien sentiments.

The opposite view is advanced by those who point out that these foreign groups are more contented through having newspapers in their own languages and that they learn more about American institutions from these papers than they could get in any other way.

The question is one that merits the attention of research students of our journalism.

The satisfactions in wielding journalistic influence are thus described by Chester S. Lord who experienced them during a long career :

The editor may exercise his gifts of persuasion in unnumbered directions. The important activities of the world pass by him in daily review. His mental vision may survey the field of human thought, furnishing delightful subjects for consideration, for study, for exposition. In all modesty and without vainglory he may rejoice in the satisfaction of well-directed influence; may find pleasure in the responsibility of influencing public opinion; may take pride in the endeavor to aid in the uplift of his fellow men. What greater reward hath man than this?

He may pulverize presidents, cremate cabinets, scalp senators and sandbag sin and superstition. There are no problems of statecraft, science, society or religion that he may not undertake. Everybody likes to tell his neighbor the latest news and gossip, and especially likes to add what he thinks about it. The newspaper editor tells his information to thousands and he finds additional satisfaction in telling it well. To take a hand in every political shindy is uproariously good fun; indeed, notwithstanding all its importance, its responsibilities, its dignities, there is more fun in the newspaper business than in any other occupation known to man.

Abraham Lincoln is quoted as saying :

With public sentiment, nothing can fail; without it, nothing can succeed. Consequently, he who moulds public sentiment goes deeper than he who enacts statutes or pronounces decisions.

CHAPTER XIII

PROFESSIONAL OBLIGATIONS TO THE COMMUNITY

Special consideration may well be given to that exercise of newspaper influence which has for its object some specific improvement in the community. Such effort is regarded by some publishers as being outside the proper sphere of a newspaper. It is difficult to appreciate that point of view. Fundamentally a newspaper is a vehicle of information, a general educational influence, a marketplace for the world of commerce; but what principle restricts it from also being a counsellor, a champion, a crusader? Where is the incongruity in this broadening of function, provided the primary obligation of presenting the truth is not compromised? And it need not be. Supplying facts and revealing truth are the minimum requirements of good journalism. Service to the community and to individual readers is thrown in for good measure.

The fact that the word service has been worn threadbare, that it has been used blatantly by hypocrites engaged in exploitation has not destroyed its character as a good word. It has no adequate synonym.

The Dynamic Ideal Not Modern

While newspaper leadership has followed many new lines in these times and the varieties of service rendered surpass any dreams of the older journalism, yet the spirit of accomplishment was present then as now. Writing of the *New York Tribune* under Greeley and of its contemporaries, James H. Wilson, biographer of Dana, has thus described their attitude towards their time:

Nothing seems to have been too trivial, or too great for that matter, for their consideration. Standing, as it were, like sentinels on a watch tower, they caught the first signs of every social or

political disturbance, and took cognizance of every event which promised to affect the public interest.

They were leaders, not followers, of public opinion. They were teachers, not always wise or infallible, but always deeply in earnest and full of enthusiasm; always striving mightily after the truth as they saw it, and endeavoring to draw correct conclusions from it, and in this noble work no opposition silenced, no danger daunted them.

A type of subject sometimes dealt with editorially is illustrated in the following from an issue of the *Tribune* in 1855:

Eating at our railroad stations is a very unsatisfactory and unwholesome performance. The passengers should eat as the cars roll on, leaving the time of stoppages for wood and water at their disposal. At 7 A. M. the provider should step aboard with his cooked food, which he deposits in a baggage half-car at the head of the train, where he should have a stove to heat water and keep his provisions warm. Then he should enter the forward passenger-car with food for four on a waiter, and the first four who wish to eat should take this, pay for it, face their seats to each other, and eat as deliberately as they choose. Thus all who want may be supplied.

It seems about time that we should also have berths fitted on our night trains.

Such editorial utterances, to be sure, bear little resemblance to the thoroughgoing newspaper "campaign" of the present, but the driving force is the same; only the methods are different.

The New York *World* under Joseph Pulitzer employed the persistent drive to accomplish some specific purpose. Rapid transit, opening of museums on Sunday, reforms in corrective institutions were some of its objectives.

From the day of its founding by William Rockhill Nelson, in 1880, the Kansas City *Star* has been a dynamic newspaper. "The *Star* has a greater purpose in life than merely to print the news. It believes in doing things," declared its founder. The paper immediately set out to improve the streets, to encourage intelligent tree planting, to show the economy and beauty of permanent stone bridges. Colonel Nelson's biographer records that,

His first triumph as a defender of the faith was in preventing the gift of the city's streets to a transportation company that had demonstrated its unwillingness to furnish adequate street-car service. The greatest municipal achievement in which Mr. Nelson aided—the parks—is inseparable from the interlacing and interlinking system of parkways and boulevards—streets of superfine quality, demonstrating by the manner of their construction and their systematic maintenance what intelligent road making might mean.

In the Far West as early as 1882 the San Francisco *Chronicle* undertook to encourage fruit growing on the Pacific coast. It promoted the first demonstration of the use of electricity for lighting purposes. It conducted experiments in weather forecasting, for the protection of fruit growers, and was instrumental in the establishment of the Weather Bureau. It campaigned against loan sharks in its city. It worked for city beautification.

The newspapers mentioned in connection with public service undertakings are usually large city dailies. That is only because such cases are more conspicuous. The small dailies and weeklies of the country are quite as much devoted to campaigns for specific ends as their larger contemporaries. And they are not mere imitators. The ideal of direct service appeals to the great majority of editors, whether their fields are large or small.

Answers to questionnaires sent to several hundred editors form the basis for the summaries in this chapter, and eighty per cent of the answers came from editors in smaller towns.

The ideal of community service is emphasized by numerous annual awards: the Pulitzer award for the newspaper performing the "most disinterested and meritorious public service," and the award for the best account of the services of the press during the year; the Missouri Press Association's cup for the paper doing the greatest good for its community, are examples. Turning the idea around, the Birmingham (Alabama) *News* awards a cup to the citizen judged to have done the most for his town during the year.

Let us now consider some of the principal directions taken by these efforts at community service.

Funds for Charity and Relief

Among the earliest and the most common of the activities by newspapers, outside the strict limits of disseminating information, are those having to do with the relief of suffering.

CASE.—Free ice for mothers and babies in the tenement districts is one form of relief work occasionally promoted by a city newspaper, the first instance of which is said to have been the raising of a fund for the purpose by the *New York Herald* in 1892.

Comment.—The newspaper, in a case like this, functions as a provider of opportunity for philanthropy as well as a purveyor of ice to the poor. It places the opportunity for humanitarianism not only before those in position to respond in a large way but also before those whose response can be only in pennies and dimes. It educates the community in charity and supplies a convenient outlet for the sympathy it arouses.

Among the other similar undertakings that might be mentioned are:

Fresh air funds, the purpose of which is to provide vacations in the country, during summer months, for children of the poor in cities. The first movement of the sort initiated by a newspaper is said to have had its beginning in New York in the Seventies through the efforts of the *Evening Post* and the *Tribune*. Thousands of children have been sent to the country each season since then, the total number being estimated at 360,000.

Christmas funds, Goodfellow activities following a plan originated by the *Chicago Tribune*, Community Christmas trees. Also in St. Louis a campaign by the *Post-Dispatch* to reduce the price of Christmas trees by publicity as to prices received by producers, wholesalers, and retailers.

Milk funds.

Funds for people suffering from some disaster such as the Chicago fire of 1876, the Johnstown flood, the Galveston flood, the San Francisco earthquake and fire, the earthquake in Japan.

Assistance for relatives of those killed in the performance of acts of heroism or in the line of duty.

Promotion of establishments for social service and correction and the maintenance of psychological clinics, sanitarium for children, and juvenile courts.

Assistance for the "hundred neediest cases," a form of charity inaugurated by the *New York Times*. It publishes a brief description of each case similar to the following which was "case 31":

John was 28 when he died of tuberculosis last summer. He left his wife, Laura, with a four-year-old boy, a two-year-old girl, and an unborn baby who arrived several months later. The two little ones cling to Laura's skirts, as she holds the smiling infant in her lap, and want to know when their daddy will come home with things to eat. That is all they look forward to now. When Laura is stronger and the baby older she will be able to do something to support them. Now, however, it is a throw between the orphan asylum or the home she is anxious to keep for them.

"Total amount needed, \$650."

For Industrial Benefits

The newspaper is proverbially a town builder and its efforts frequently take the form of advocacy for some new business enterprise either in the town itself or the neighboring territory.

CASE.—A newspaper decided that the prosperity of its section would be increased by cultivation of sugar beets. It printed educational matter; persuaded individuals to make the experiment; and eventually saw its dreams realized.

Comment.—Agricultural colleges and experiment stations recognize the newspaper as a most useful ally.

A complete list of such cases would be virtually a list of all the different kinds of business undertakings. Some of the more conspicuous examples are:

Bringing the dairy industry to a community.

Proving to a community the practicability of building a cotton mill.

Shaming a community into providing suitable public buildings.

Helping to induce railroads to build new stations.

Supporting commercial organizations.

Encouraging diversity and rotation of crops. For example, an editor writes:

Alfalfa did not seem to thrive well here. We devoted considerable time to inquiry and learned that the reason alfalfa did not grow well was because the soil lacked lime, or because the alfalfa was not disced or otherwise divided. Every time we found a man who was raising alfalfa successfully we told how he did it. We printed stories about farmers who were making money off cows, or chickens, or English bluegrass, or Kentucky bluegrass, and tried to show that it was foolish to depend entirely on corn and wheat.

Or, as another country editor writes:

We bring home to our readers the fact that only well-bred pigs are profitable. We tell what some farmer is doing with a dozen Holstein cows. We print stories showing the wisdom of vaccination for cholera. We advertise the farm experiment station in our vicinity.

Or in the words of another:

Since grasshoppers do great damage to crops here, I make it a rule to print, every three or four months, the poison bran mash receipt so much used by farmers.

A Southern paper won conspicuous success in an educational campaign against the boll weevil.

Protecting business interests from needless loss. A bank failure usually precipitates a delicate situation in which the restriction of financial disaster to the narrowest possible limits often depends considerably on the discretion of the press.

Similar in character is the work of a newspaper in fighting fraudulent concerns.

CASE.—The exposure of the Ponzi swindle in Boston, which defrauded the public of millions, is credited largely to the *Boston Post* and that paper received the Pulitzer award for the most distinguished and meritorious public service rendered by any newspaper in the United States in 1920.

Comment.—The opening of the campaign required courage since, at the start, Ponzi's position seemed impregnable.

Campaigns to Compel Fair Prices

Reference is often made to the fact that the press has been accused of deliberately shutting its eyes to profiteering carried on by its advertisers. Credit for the success of the Food Administration during the war, and in a less degree for the Fuel Administration, is accorded to the newspapers; but they are not generally reputed to be watchful of the "spread" of prices between producer and consumer. There are notable instances, however, in which newspapers have gone so far as to become distributors of goods in order to force prices downward, when the operation of the law of supply and demand or of competition seemed to be suspended.

CASE.—The *New York Globe*, after exposing the unreasonably high prices of meat in its city, without appreciable effect, undertook to operate a chain of shops which it supplied from its own fishing boats and from cargoes of frozen meat which it shipped from Australia. The resulting effect on prices was highly satisfactory.

Comment.—It seems incongruous that a newspaper should engage in the meat business, and so it would be if the purpose were profit; but in this case the purpose was the protection of the public from injustice. Radical procedure seemed necessary. It was a form of leadership justified by devotion to the public interest.

To be sure, in all such undertaking the newspaper advertises itself as a crusader. It endeavors to establish itself in public esteem. That such should be its motive is not to its discredit. The disposition of some critics to sneer at such activities as being entirely selfish and therefore hypocritical is contemptible. As well question the motives of any other public benefactor. If selfishness is the mainspring of all our actions, at least there is a better type of selfishness which, in the course of serving our own ends, benefits others.

Newspapers in several cities have been engaged temporarily in the coal business in order to reduce prices on grades of coal used by the poor. Often a brief "demonstration" is enough to accomplish the purpose.

Guarding the Community Health

Since healthfulness is largely a matter of controllable conditions and since carelessness is usually at the bottom of any threat to the public health, the newspaper has opportunity to make good use of its educational and persuasive powers.

CASE.—A better water supply is frequently the object of a newspaper campaign extending over many years.

Comment.—Success usually takes the form of a majority vote by the citizens and is won by throwing every part of the paper into the fight—news, editorials, cartoons, advertising, features.

Other measures having health significance are:

Food shows and cooking schools.

Abatement of the smoke nuisance.

Promoting the organization of efficient health departments.

Exposure of medical quacks.

Education in methods of combating contagious diseases such as typhoid fever, and information to allay hysteria occasioned by such diseases as infantile paralysis.

Initiating and supporting a movement for a hospital.

Securing better methods of sewage disposal and of garbage collection.

Helping Educate the Community

Aside from its primary function of educating the people as to current affairs, the newspaper recognizes its obligation to assist every agency for popular enlightenment and the spread of culture.

CASE.—Almost without exception, newspapers are champions of the public schools, advocating good buildings and equipment and liberal salaries to teachers.

Comment.—They are also watchful of anything that threatens harm to the schools, as, for example, the high school fraternities.

Other interests of like purpose close to the heart of the community newspaper are:

Public libraries.

Institutes of art.

Civic orchestras and bands.

Chautauquas, lecture courses, and concerts.

Teachers' and farmers' institutes.

Fairs.

Facilities for organized play.

Direct educational influence through the publication of scientific articles and similar material from authoritative sources.

The Fight against Ugliness

It seems as though only a small per cent of the inhabitants of towns and cities stop to think about the beautification of their surroundings, and a still smaller per cent makes any effort in that direction. It is the function of the newspaper to induce people to think together in such matters and to follow leadership in constructive movements.

CASE.—Billboards are a conventional object for a newspaper attack.

Comment.—Here the newspaper has a selfish interest in regulating or banishing a competing advertising medium; but this fact should not invalidate entirely its effort against obstructions to the enjoyment of natural beauty and hazards along city streets.

Similar in purpose are campaigns for,

The erection of monuments of various kinds.

The improvement of parks.

The broadening of streets.

The removal of overhead street signs.

Clean-up days or weeks.

Beautification of back yards by means of gardens.

Giving prizes for best kept lawns and best assortment of flowers.

Beautification of cemeteries.

The planting of trees.

For Greater Safety

Congestion of population increases dangers from accidents, largely because of modern developments in transportation.

The safety council in cities is an effort to meet the situation. Newspapers always work with such agencies and often receive credit for initiating them.

CASE.—The *Cleveland Press* undertook to solve the traffic problems of its city. It employed a high authority on such matters to study the situation and present recommendations. It waged war on automatic signals judged to be unsatisfactory.

Comment.—In the employment of a traffic expert the paper did something that the city government might properly have done. While the act could hardly be called an encroachment on the city's rights, it seems a less typical newspaper service than one in which education of the public is involved, as in the encouragement of careful driving and proper use of the signals of the road.

The promotion of safety takes such other forms as :

Advocacy of the Sane Fourth.

Publicity for speeders and jay drivers.

The Task of Unification

Doubtless good ends must sometimes be attained through bitter conflict, but bitterness between groups in cities or small towns has not often proved constructive. Sometimes town rows are intensified by rival newspapers, but generally a publisher recognizes that his duty and his interests urge him to promote community peace.

CASE.—This instance from a small town is described by Norman J. Radder of Indiana University :

What a newspaper can accomplish in reconciling factional differences in a community is shown by the achievement of the publisher of the Leonardville (Kan.) *Monitor*. While Leonardville has a population of only 325, the people of the village and vicinity were made of half a dozen different national extractions, five or six different religious denominations, and all these elements were lined up into two factions. One of the first things the new editor did was to call a town meeting in his office. By personal effort he managed to get some of the town leaders in business, finance, religious work and society to attend. An organization was formed which ever since that time has been meeting regularly and has

resulted in coöperation in business, charity, and civic affairs where before there was conflict and friction.

Comment.—Unification of town with surrounding country is a similar objective for newspaper effort. A town in Missouri has afforded so fine a demonstration of what can be done in this line—more than half of the members of its commercial club are farmers—that the plan is known as “the Trenton idea.”

From statements by editors may be gleaned such expressions as the following:

Part of my effort as editor for the past twenty years has been to keep down strife between the different business institutions, especially the banks. It is doubtful if any town with more than one bank has not had a bank “fight.” This always serves to align certain influential people of the town with one or the other of these institutions, and when that condition exists there is not much pulling together for the betterment of all.

Our paper has done a service to its community by refusing to become the siege gun for two religious factions by getting the combatants to see that the publication of articles for both sides would only serve to put the community into a turmoil.

Broadening Our Sympathies

Better understanding between classes and groups, resulting in greater tolerance and sympathy, is of prime importance from the standpoint of social and industrial well-being. In this direction all newspapers function as a matter of course. In some specific cases they may deliberately choose the opposite purpose, intensifying misunderstanding; but in most instances they undertake to interpret people to each other, in the interests of all.

CASE.—A newspaper printed a series of articles explaining the trials encountered in their daily work by men dealing with the public. One on the policeman, for example, told of the difficulties which such officers meet and urged coöperation by the public.

Comment.—A refreshing variation from the campaign attacking the police,

Other instances of the same general type are:

A "politeness campaign" was conducted by the *Chicago Tribune* in the effort to induce people to treat each other with more consideration. A prize of \$50 was given each day to the most truly polite person observed by the reporter on the assignment.

The *Springfield Republican* once ran a series of, "How would you like to be ——" articles, beginning with the mayor and including the chief of police, an armorer in the United States arsenal, a tire maker in a factory, and many others, giving an intimate picture of their day's work.

Closely related to these efforts is the newspaper's interest in seeing and commending the good.

CASE.—A rural editor reports that his most effective instrument for "stiffening the moral backbones of his readers" is the small editorial item such as:

Mayor Doe deserves much credit for his stand on the matter of appointing a city marshal. He was between two fires but he stood for the right.

Mr. Roe, our picture-show man, always gives us clean pictures even though he could make more money out of a less desirable kind. Our good people commend him for this.

Dr. Brown preached a splendid sermon Sunday night on the matter of law enforcement. The community is with him on this question and hopes for more sermons along the same line.

Comment.—"Pointing out the little acts of kindness that usually go unheralded" is mentioned by another editor as one of his greatest accomplishments.

Arousing Community Pride

One of the great forces towards community improvement, as it is towards individual improvement, is pride in achievement. Every community has much to be proud of. Let the paper advertise the fact. If people can be persuaded to take the position of advertisers of their town, they will at once be able to see its strong and its weak features. Any sales effort must be preceded by analysis of "selling points." Such analysis is bound to have a reflex influence towards securing improvement of the commodity—in this case, the community.

One such analysis often used by newspapers and civic organizations to set people thinking about their town is, "Ten Tests of a Town," by the present writer. It is as follows:

TEN TESTS OF A TOWN

Questions that people ask about YOUR town
before they decide to make it THEIR town

1. ATTRACTIVENESS

Shall I like the town—its "atmosphere"? Does it have the beauty of shaded streets and other beautiful features? Is it a quiet, roomy, airy, well-lighted town? Does it have attractive public buildings and homes? Is it well paved? Is it clean in every sense?

2. HEALTHFULNESS

Will my family and I have a reasonable chance to keep well in that town? How about its water supply? Its sanitary system? Its methods of milk inspection? Its health department? Its hospitals? Is it without any congested district?

3. EDUCATION

Can I educate my family and myself in that town? How about its public schools—present and future? Its institutions of higher education or of business training? Its libraries? Its lecture and concert courses? Its newspapers? Its postal facilities? Its schedule of salaries to teachers? Its investment in school property?

4. PEOPLE

Shall I like the people of the town? Are they "home folks" without false exclusiveness? Are they neighborly and friendly? Is the town free from factionalism? Does it have strong religious, fraternal, and social organizations? Is it a law-abiding community? Do the people use their public libraries and support artistic undertakings? Do they keep their children in school and not in factories? Are they good American citizens?

5. RECREATION

Can I have a good time in that town—I and my family? How about the theatres, museums, gymnasiums, parks, etc.? Are there active agencies for providing good

entertainments, athletic contests, etc.? Are inviting opportunities for pleasure drives afforded by well paved streets?

6. LIVING

Can we live reasonably and well in that town? Are the best of modern conveniences available for its residents—electricity, gas, telephones, etc.? Are the housing and shopping conditions favorable? Rents, taxes, and prices fair? Hotels good? Home and truck gardens and dairy products plentiful? Is it a good town in which to bring up children?

7. ACCESSIBILITY

Can we go and come easily? Does the town have adequate railroad connections and train service? Street car lines? Interurban lines? Well marked automobile routes and hard surfaced roads? Desirable proximity to other cities affording additional advantages?

8. BUSINESS

Can I make good use of capital in that town? Are there good banking facilities? Manufacturing interests? Up-to-date stores? Good shipping facilities? Favorable labor conditions? A prosperous farming territory? Fair real estate values? Reasonably cheap power? Active coöperation among business interests?

9. EMPLOYMENT

Can I get a job in that town at fair pay and with good prospects for the future? Can I count on coöperation from organizations making it their business to help introduce and establish new commercial interests and to welcome new citizens?

10. PROGRESSIVENESS

Shall I find that I am in a live town having a progressive city government, active civic organizations, modern fire department, adequate police protection, organized measures for accident prevention, and a pull-together spirit in everything—a town with a future?

The citizen cannot control the climate, natural scenery, nor historic associations of his town; but if, in other respects, it does not measure up to the standard that will be applied to it by intelligent town-buyers, he can get busy and *help make it measure up.*

Miscellaneous Projects for the General Welfare

Among the various undertakings described by one or more of the hundreds of editors queried on the subject are:

Securing better fire protection.

Promoting such organizations as Boy Scouts and Camp-fire Girls.

Encouraging law enforcement by the police.

A campaign for better street paving.

Organization of community luncheons for the promotion of civic spirit and of forums for the discussion of public questions.

Criticism of the courts for delays, technical evasions, and failure to apply the law impartially.

Advocacy of municipal ownership of a public utility.

Campaign for a solution of the housing problem.

Persuading the city to acquire land for park purposes and to develop it advantageously.

Securing the establishment of a public market.

Giving a "land show" to encourage "back to the land" movement. Coöperating with churches in promoting their own and the community's interests.

Conducting spelling contests and drawing contests for school children.

Aiding the building of community houses.

Giving publicity to private and public improvements, as well as to some things needing improvement.

Leading in a campaign to raise a bonus to assist in building a hotel.

Stressing the importance of good lighting everywhere in the town.

Advocating fire limits to change the town from wood to brick or stone.

Services in Larger Fields

Community service should not be interpreted to mean service within too narrow boundaries.

A public improvement, broader than the town itself, commonly advocated vigorously by newspapers is the good road. The following instance is typical:

CASE.—A county was asked to build a rock road as a link in a national highway. A petition was circulated. The editor of one of the papers, who had lived in the county forty years, refused to do anything more than print the news of meetings on the subject. He advised the editor of the second paper that either publisher would lose most of his circulation among the farmers if the paved roads were openly supported. The other editor, however, started a crusade for the roads. Maps, statistics, news stories, interviews, editorials—all were used in the fight. He printed the news of opposition efforts, rather scantily perhaps, but more or less fairly. He had sense enough to avoid abuse. His efforts were crowned with success. After eighteen months the petitions bore the necessary number of signatures. His paper lost two subscribers. It gained a considerable list as a direct result of the good road campaign and made great strides in prestige because of the effort.

Comment.—Good work!

CASE.—The *Detroit News*, aroused by the sky-rocketing prices of lumber in Michigan, published a series of articles on reforestation methods. The material was issued in pamphlet form. A similar campaign was conducted by the *Pittsburgh Post*, the *Milwaukee Journal* and others.

Comment.—In like manner the *News* reprinted its important series of articles on the inefficiency of the Patent Office at Washington. "Thousands of copies of the pamphlet were distributed," writes a member of the staff. "Obviously *Detroit* and the *News* had no special or direct interest in the condition of that Department, any more than Key West or Seattle, San Diego or Portland, and there was nothing to expect from the distribution of the pamphlet except recognition of service. Despite the harsh statements of fact, important officials of the department extended to the *News* and the writer of the series their appreciation of the stories. The investment in the series and pamphlet was large; the reward not immediately appreciable, but certain."

CASE.—The *Memphis Commercial Appeal* was awarded the Pulitzer medal for 1922, given to the paper judged to have performed the greatest public service in that year. Its service was a campaign against the Ku Klux Klan.

Comment.—In the previous year twenty-seven large newspapers joined in the publication of a series of articles prepared by the New York *World* on the evils in the "Invisible Empire."

The Radio Service

Among the newspaper activities which are not strictly journalistic, the maintenance of radio broadcasting stations most closely duplicates primary newspaper functions. In one sense, such an undertaking puts a newspaper into competition with itself, or substitutes a non-remunerative enterprise for profitable circulation building. No newspaper operating a station has found it of any direct benefit to the paper itself. The cost of operating a large station may run above \$50,000 a year. But the indirect benefits are thought to be large. Good will is created—though one radio editor declares it to be evanescent: "Put on a couple of 'bloomers' and your audience clamors for you to stay out of the air and let them tune in on something good." Contacts with individual readers through letters run as high, in some offices, as two thousand a week. The general publicity gained is great. It is an amazing activity, and the soul of a newspaper, as Henry Watterson has said, is "activity, activity, activity."

Then too, the adoption of radio by the press was a protective measure. It is teaching the public to get its news out of the air; it kills the sale of sport extras sometimes; but these things may better be done by newspapers themselves than by outsiders. Besides, the radio has potentialities as an advertising competitor. In spite of this, however, it is safe to say that radio broadcasting by newspapers is ninety per cent public service bringing no immediate returns.

War Services

A book might be written on the war services of newspapers. And yet they were not different in nature from those of peace times, only different in form and degree. Another fruitful subject for study would be the after effects of the newspapers' war activities in stimulating keener zest for community service under normal conditions. But we must fore-

go here any extended excursions into the historical backgrounds of the subject. In passing, the fact may be noted that the Pulitzer award for public service was given for the year 1917 to the *New York Times* "for printing in full valuable documents affecting issues of the war," and for 1918 to the *Milwaukee Journal*, "for its strong and courageous campaign for Americanism in a constituency where foreign elements made such a policy hazardous from a business point of view."

The services of the press everywhere in exposing German propaganda—for which the *Providence Journal* was especially conspicuous—in aiding the Red Cross, in promoting bond sales, and in a hundred other directions are too familiar to require enumeration.

The Best Means to the End

In replying to the question, "Do you get the best results from news, editorials, or personal work?" eleven per cent of the eighty-three editors answering the inquiry specified the news columns as being most effective in community service. One reporter, Jack Lait, has written of the mighty power of the human interest story. By using it judiciously his paper, he declares, has "brought alms to the penniless, homes to the homeless, hope to the hopeless, jobs to the unemployed, legal aid to the disadvantaged, wheel chairs and crutches and medicines and physicians to the ailing, fresh air to the stifling, ice to the fevered, clothes to the freezing, advice and cheer and courage to the despairing, schooling to the ambitious poor, opportunity to the timid, liberty to the worthy imprisoned, public indignation and private endeavors toward avenging wrongs and righting them."

Six per cent placed the editorial columns in the lead as to getting results. Five per cent emphasized the importance of personal endeavor outside the newspaper. The rest—a large majority—maintained that success requires the combined use of all these means.

That one major campaign of a civic nature is enough for one time is the opinion of the large majority of these editors.

The National Editorial Association once offered a prize for

the best article on editorial responsibility. It was won by Frank O. Edgecombe, editor of the *Geneva (Nebraska) Signal*, whose article closed with these words:

The editor who may unworthily use his power may debauch the minds, the hopes and the ambitions of those who read his words. He may raise animosities between neighbors, spread discord, undermine public confidence, and kindle the fires of prejudice. He may so mingle truths and half truths and he may so prey upon the vain imaginings of unworthy souls that the very foundations of the state may be disrupted. Contrariwise, he may clarify the public mind by a proper assembling of facts and by presenting proper conclusions therefrom. He can caution the unwary, counsel the indiscreet, teach the truth to the open minded and denounce the perpetrators of evil and those who would corrupt private and public life. The editor must choose. He cannot serve two masters. **He cannot shirk responsibility.**

Credit for Work Done

The editor may often be in doubt as to just how much his efforts contributed to any desired result, and people seem loath to give the newspaper credit. Its support of good causes is accepted as a matter of course.

CASE.—An editor in a town of a few hundred people gives this testimony:

For nearly ten years our paper has been fussing about ugly telephone poles on Main street. Just recently they were removed. We don't know that our stuff moved the poles, but we think it helped.

Up until two years ago we had one of those old ramshackle country town bandstands at the intersection of two down-town streets. We never referred to the bandstand without calling it a "hick" bandstand. Finally folks got so ashamed of it that they moved it away. I don't know that we brought this about but certainly we didn't do any harm.

A year or so ago the principal streets of this town were paved. Some of the paving became defective. The contractor had given a three-year maintenance bond. We called attention to the fact that this paving should be repaired before the termination of the bond. At the next meeting of the Chamber of Commerce a leading business man demanded the repair of the paving. He didn't give us any credit, but the council has taken steps to have the paving repaired.

Broader Responsibilities

Broader in scope than community service as ordinarily spoken of, though not different from it in kind, is the impact of newspaper influence upon matters of national or world import. It is not often given to any single newspaper to play a part on the world stage, but the press as a whole does play such a part and it is desirable that we seek credible opinion as to what that part is.

The Press and International Relations

In considering various views as to the fact of journalistic influence in international affairs and as to its nature, the student will find such shades of opinion as the following:

First, that such influence hardly exists at all. This conclusion grows out of the belief that the press is too ignorant in such matters to exert an influence; and that even if it does shape public opinion on some issue the results are negligible because of the fact that, except in rare crises, public opinion affects foreign policies little. For decades whole peoples hated the Turks, but the Turks apparently suffered no practical embarrassment from that fact. Furthermore, it is pointed out that government can always control or modify press influence by propaganda, thereby insuring that such influence as may be brought to bear upon government shall be influence created by itself.

Second, that the influence exists, but not as a direct control over the acts of statesmen. Only as an indirect agency operating through public opinion in critical times. And that such influence is usually bad. The press is charged with being chauvinistic; spreading a false doctrine of super-patriotism; subordinating all questions of international justice to the one consideration of what may be the national interest; ignoring the newspapers' sacred obligation to do everything possible for peace.

Noting the fact that many newspapers prospered during the Civil War, E. L. Godkin once wrote:

Every incident which can by any possibility lead to an international conflict is greatly magnified. Every blunder is converted into deliberate insult. All foreign statesmen are made to plot

against the United States. . . . Until we get a race of editors who will consent to take a share of the diplomatist's responsibility for the national peace and honor, the newspapers will constitute a constant danger to the amicable relations of great powers.

Third, that newspaper influence in foreign affairs exists, at least potentially, but that it must necessarily remain a blind influence because success in statecraft requires secrecy. Secretary of State Hughes has admirably set forth that view in its most liberal form. After referring to the weekly press conferences with the President and the semi-weekly conferences with the Secretary of State, he thus presented his idea of the matter:

There is thus the most direct contact with those who are the principal purveyors of information, and the chief educators of the public. This is a substitute for parliamentary interpellation. It is in this manner that, in substance, account is rendered to the final authority.

Open diplomacy must still be diplomacy, and it cannot be open at the cost of losing its essential character and of frustrating its proper purposes.

The press, in each country, in large measure is likely to voice extreme demands and resist accommodations. Often the pseudo-patriotic spirit is developed, most probably in the interest of local politics, and efforts are made to prevent settlements by inflammatory appeals to passion in one or more of the countries concerned. It is most desirable that such endeavors should not be facilitated by the information of mere proposals, arguments and tentative positions; by disclosures which at the best, pending the effort at adjustments, can but afford glimpses of the situation. At least we may appreciate the fact that peoples cannot deal directly with peoples; that there must be negotiations, and that there must be agents of negotiation; and that when these are selected as wisely as may be practicable, there must be reasonable freedom to enable them to secure results.

They cannot adequately perform their task under a fire of criticism or successfully conduct negotiations which are practically taken out of their hands and directed by a clamorous public.

With these considerations, it remains true, there should be no secrecy for its own sake; general policies should be made clear.

If there is to be less reticence in diplomacy, there must be, if not a greater reticence, at least a keener sense of responsibility in the discussion of international questions. Open diplomacy and blatant and injudicious utterances will not go together.

The sort of responsibility that the press might be expected to feel is illustrated by an incident under the war censorship in England. A note by President Wilson, forecasting his "peace without victory" attitude had been published in England. It is related by Burton J. Hendrick, author and journalist, that:

When the correspondents filed their dispatches telling of English reaction to the note, the representative of the foreign office spent half an hour considering whether the American correspondents could cable their country that the note had been received in England with "surprise and irritation." After much discussion it was decided that "irritation" could not be used and the message of the Associated Press, after undergoing this careful editing by the foreign office, was a weak and ridiculous description of the high state of excitement which prevailed in Great Britain. The fact that the British foreign office should have given all this trouble over the expression sent to American newspapers and should even have spent half an hour debating whether a particular word should be used almost pathetically illustrates the great care taken by the British government not to influence American opinion against the allies.

Whatever sanction may be given by the press to the cautious doling out of truth in time of war, such restrictions are not popular with it under normal conditions. There was vigorous editorial rejoinder to the statement by Secretary Hughes, previously quoted, one writer, under the heading, "Our Secretary of Secrecy," declaring that:

Never before has the Department of State shown such contempt for the rights of the people in matters of international intercourse that endanger the future peace and prosperity of this nation and the world. Secret diplomacy—plaything of the devil and agency of war rapine and greed—rules supreme. . . .

The press has done its best with the equivocal, double-edged information that has been vouchsafed and it has seen itself denying under banner headlines the very facts that it asseverated the day before. It has been a thoroughly humiliating period for editors and correspondents and the time has come to call for a new deal.

A good way to begin would be by discontinuing the present useless so-called weekly question-and-answer conferences that Secretary Hughes holds with the Washington newspaper corps. They

are a waste of busy newspapermen's time and seem to have developed the country's leading false rumor factory.

The editor who demands the right to print the whole truth must be regarded as an extremist, in the present state of society. The effects on a small community of an experiment by its paper in telling the literal truth about everybody and everything have often been painted by the newspaper humorist. Most journalists are able to appreciate that a nation is only a community enlarged, and that there is such a thing as premature, indiscreet, and destructive publicity.

A newspaper correspondent, Harold Phelps Stokes, complaining of the difficulty of obtaining information from the Department of State, described more satisfactory conditions during the Peace Conference in Paris:

It was not generally known at the time, but it was the fact that Colonel House was the mouthpiece for nine-tenths of the news which came out of Paris during the later months of negotiations.

Here were international negotiations of the highest order of delicacy being conducted day by day. And day by day Colonel House walked into the newspaper conference and told the correspondents, with the most astounding frankness, the day's developments. It has been said that silence is the safest shield, but House through his handling of the American correspondents at Paris, showed that frankness and confidence may be made every bit as sure a shield as silence.

In the effort to measure public opinion, newspapers have sometimes taken a poll of their readers and others whom they could reach with ballots. Such was the New York *Herald's* poll on the desirability of America's presence at the Genoa Conference, and the New York *Globe's* poll on the question of this country's entrance into the League of Nations.

The world functions of the press have thus been summarized by an English journalist, E. F. Lawson:

Every nation of the earth wants to know other people's opinions. It is only the absence of a sufficient quantity of free and cheap news which enables the baser elements to maintain the influence which they exercise on opinion.

We journalists are not accused of being, as a class, prone to

self-depreciation, but I honestly believe that we ourselves have no conception of our power to secure the peace of the world.

A fourth view as to journalistic influence in international affairs is that such influence is very great and that it is beneficent and that it would be still more useful if better informed. John Galsworthy, the English author, thus expressed the idea: "The exchange of international thought is the only possible salvation of the world."

The failure of the press, with one or two exceptions, to publish the secret treaties made late in the war has been pointed to as a betrayal of world interests. According to one writer, Irving Brant:

If the secret treaties had been dealt with on the basis of their importance, it would have become necessary in order to keep America fervently and effectively in the war, for every signatory to those secret treaties formally to disavow their provisions. And that was exactly what was needed, both to win the peace and to make the war easier to win.

The purification of the war would have brought liberty-loving people together in an unprecedented unity of purpose. As it was, however, the secret treaties were exploited to the full in the Central Empires.

An instance of a happier sort in connection with the Washington Disarmament Conference has been described as follows by Louis Wiley, business manager of the *New York Times*:

When Japan balked at the proposed percentage of limitation on her battleships, the newspapers announced it to the peoples of the world. Rejoicing in the hope which the conference held out of effective steps for the prevention of war, they were disturbed lest their happy visions should be dispelled. Disapproval was openly expressed, promptly and emphatically. The Japanese commissioners took warning, and a satisfactory agreement was reached in a few days.

The insistence of France on a large submarine tonnage again disturbed public opinion. France yielded and accepted the principles of the Root declaration on the limitation of submarine warfare. Knowledge of the position of France would not have reached the public but for the newspapers.

The Press and the Law

No one questions that among the broader responsibilities of the press are those growing out of its influence on (1) the enactment of laws, (2) the execution of laws by peace officers, (3) the judicial interpretation and application of laws, (4) the repeal or modification of laws.

As regards the first, cases without end might be described in which, through information furnished to legislators, through publicity given to obstructive tactics within the legislative body, through the indirect influence of an aroused public opinion in favor or against some measure, newspapers appear to have had much to do with the making of laws. That the press has sometimes abused its power, that it has made mistakes, is undoubtedly true; but not more true than that it has a legitimate function in this field.

With respect to the second, third, and fourth points of contact between the press and the law, the only thing that need be said here is that the controlling purpose must always be to help preserve order and further justice. A newspaper's conservatism is never more justified than in its treatment of a social institution. Not that it always stands for the *status quo*, but that it is careful to build at the same time that it tears down. The press has been accused of encouraging anarchism by its adoption of a capitalistic view of the rightness of might. It has been accused of compromising the dignity of courts and interfering with the free progress of trials. It has been accused of bringing all law into contempt of the ignorant by its flouting of some one unpopular law. In some instances the charges have been well founded; but the fact that, in general, newspaper influence has been constructive as regards the law has not been controverted.

The Press and Social Unity

As the newspaper is responsible, to a considerable degree, for the unification of its community, so in larger ways it is the best medium for the socializing "advertisement of one person's or one group's thoughts and purposes to other persons and

groups." At the bottom of it all lies the theory that we can not hate a man if we know him. Inter-sectional misunderstandings, inter-class distrust can be mitigated or intensified by the press. To say that the efforts of the press should always be towards peace is doubtless going too far. Few people believe in peace at any price. But certainly its efforts should always be towards understanding. This may lead to conflict for the time being, but is the only hope of permanent adjustment.

Other General Responsibilities

Among the other interests which are most often mentioned as being largely in the keeping of the press are:

1. To uphold the ideals of democracy—liberty, equality, education, tolerance.

2. To cultivate the intelligence of people, not merely by giving them information, but by assuming what somebody has called an obligation to the intellect. In holding the press accountable for "the triviality of modern thinking," James M. Beck, solicitor general of the United States, said: "A quarter of a century ago men still enjoyed Sir John Falstaff; to-day it is Andy Gump. We have lost a true sense of values, and such loss has been in the past a significant sign of the decay of a civilization." Journalists themselves have deplored the crowding out of the truly significant by the merely ephemeral.

3. To labor constructively by maintaining along with the passion for publicity a sense of proportion. If emphasis on airplane accidents retards development in that field by obscuring the fact that air mails carry out a high per cent of their mileage without accident, the press should not forget that the less dramatic is sometimes the more important. The journalist should accept some one's description of him as "an ambassador abroad and a statesman at home."

4. To recognize the possibilities of journalism as literature, its dignity as an art. George Bernard Shaw has said:

Journalism is the highest form of literature; for all the highest literature is journalism. The writer who aims at producing the platitudes which are "not for an age, but for all time" has his reward in being unreadable in all ages; whilst Plato and Aristo-

phanes trying to knock some sense into the Athens of their day, Shakespeare peopling that same Athens with Elizabethan mechanics, Ibsen photographing the local doctors and vestrymen of a Norwegian parish, Carpaccio painting the life of St. Ursula exactly as if she were a woman living in the next street to him, are still alive and at home everywhere among the dust and ashes of thousands of academic, punctilious, archaeologically correct men of letters and art who spent their lives haughtily avoiding the journalist's vulgar obsession with the ephemeral.

I also am a journalist, proud of it, deliberately cutting out of my works all that is not journalism, convinced that nothing that is not journalism will live long as literature, or be of any use whilst it does live. . . . The journalist writes about all people and about all time. The other sort of man, who believes that he and his period are so distinct from all other men and periods that it would be immodest and irrelevant to allude to them or assume that they could interest any one but himself and his contemporaries, is the most infatuated of all the egotists, and consequently the most unreadable and negligible of all the authors. And so, let others cultivate what they call literature; journalism for me!

5. To reveal and uphold the ideal aspect of things, and to fight sham and hypocrisy and boorishness. The charge once made that "the Northcliffe press has destroyed almost every vestige of the beautiful English manner which gave to British public life a grace and dignity almost doge-like" can hardly be accepted at face value, but it serves as a negative illustration of one aspect of press influence. Another that might be mentioned is the treatment of marriage and other serious matters as subjects for jests of such character as to be antisocial.

6. To advance economic justice. A veteran journalist declared in 1920 that in ignoring the high cost of living, except superficially, American newspapers had, in deliberate and cowardly manner, turned away from the greatest news story of the time, every home being vitally involved in the effects of profiteering.

In these and other similar respects the press bears heavy responsibilities of a general character. It cannot escape them.

PART III

THE NEWSPAPER OF TO-MORROW

CHAPTER XIV

THE INFLUENCE OF CODES AND PROFESSIONAL STANDARDS

It is no longer possible to say, as did Henry Watterson in the *Louisville Courier-Journal*, in 1900, that "journalism is without any code of ethics or system of self-restraint and self-respect. It has no sure standards of either work or duty. The journalist has few, if any, mental perspectives to fix his horizon; neither chart of precedent nor map of discovery upon which his travel lines have been marked."

Mr. Watterson did not mean, surely, that individual journalists were without standards of their own; but that collectively they were lacking anything resembling a code.

The first step in progress towards professional standards was a widespread appreciation of the need of such standards. The second step was the formulation of codes by regional groups of editors and publishers. The third step, the amalgamation of these codes, seems to be just ahead.

In the widespread discussion during the last decade, two main points of view have been revealed: first, the belief that such codes are practicable, and should be put into form, harmonized, and welded into one structure worthy of general acceptance; second, the view that efforts towards defining the canons of journalism are absurd, or at least impractical.

Belief in the Practical Value of Codes

The following from an address by Casper S. Yost, editor of the *St. Louis Globe-Democrat*, before the American Society of Newspaper Editors, is representative of the first or optimistic attitude:

To consider and perhaps establish ethical standards of professional conduct: the society has no more important purpose than this. Each one of us no doubt has a conception of ethics as ap-

plied to journalism. Not a few of us have established and enforced ethical rules. But these, where they exist at all, are individual conceptions and individual applications and they vary widely in nature and extent.

The standards one may conceive and put into effect may be far above or far below those of another, and the newspaper that has low standards or none at all may have as strong an influence upon the general character and reputation of journalism, to put it conservatively, as that which has high standards.

The development and statement of definite moral standards has been throughout the ages an essential factor in the progress of civilization. There can be no general understanding of what is right until principles of right are conceived and given form. And there can be no general application of these principles until they are commonly accepted. Only as such principles and standards have been formulated and been accepted has civilization advanced in the moral sense.

The ethics of journalism must be somehow expressed in definite form, and somehow established as the rule of practice of an influential number of journalists, before we can have professional recognition. Individual standards will always remain individual, and continue to be as varied as individual nature, until the profession of journalism through collective consideration and action, establishes a code of professional ethics by which all journalistic conduct may be measured.

If we are to advance the profession of journalism we must give particular thought to the imponderables, remembering that they are the sources of character, of personality, of soul, and that only as we give spirit to journalism, and sustain that spirit, can it grow in honor, in usefulness and in power.

The Oregon code was formulated largely through the initiative of Colin Dymont, for many years a journalist, and afterwards a teacher of journalism and college administrator in the University of Oregon. In the course of a paper dealing with the need of such a code he wrote as follows:

In many states, and perhaps in most states, there are new ethical stirrings in the minds of newspapermen that must find tangible utterance.

This ethical commotion is a product of the sentiment that journalism should have more of a professional status. One sees the sentiment gradually finding expression in trade publications, in national periodicals, in the higher class magazines, in newspapers themselves, and hears it taught assiduously in schools of journal-

ism; and finally, as to-day, one finds the editorial associations of states voting upon ethical codes.

The commotion is not confined to the editorial side; it is discernible in the circulation and advertising departments as well. Advertising and circulation managers give to their men rules of procedure that men in the business office would never have thought of two decades ago. The three seem to be moving up together, as should be; and the promoting of the ethical impulse in each will probably take tangible form in codes of widespread adoption.

Ethics as a guide to professional practice is being crystallized more and more into actual codes. Journalism is not alone; it is even one of the last. We have been slow to move, whereas, being newspapermen, we should have moved first. For years the doctors, the lawyers, the architects, the teachers, the engineers, and men of other professional occupations, have been working on codes. Most men would instinctively know what is ethical if they stopped to think; but many don't think, and some don't know, and still others who both think and know do not care; so there becomes useful a sort of professional Sermon on the Mount through which the public opinion of each profession may become uniform and consolidated.

The business of an ethical code is to translate the best thought of newspapermen into general precepts so that the public opinion within the profession may be brought to bear upon those who transgress. The medical code is plainly getting rid of the shyster. Just so, a journalism code of general adoption should be of efficacy in ridding the profession of those who do not recognize the newspaper business as a semi-public institution in which the public has an extensive right; but who instead look upon it merely as one way of making some money and of gratifying personal ends. The pressure of the public opinion within any profession is exceedingly great.

Opposition to Codes

With respect to the Oregon code, a metropolitan newspaper, after admitting that there was nothing wrong with the rules, said:

But why do the Oregon editors feel compelled to endorse them—to sign on the dotted line, as it were?

Nobody has observed any special departures from ordinary morality on their part, though, like the rest of us, they have been no better than they should be and sometimes not quite so good. That is because they are only human, and a proclamation of in-

tention to be virtuous hereafter—well, in a way, it confesses past wickednesses.

A bit of shallow satire quite beneath serious rejoinder.

A wholesale execration of the entire business of formulating journalistic codes is that of H. L. Mencken, editor of the *American Mercury*:

Every now and then the newspapers make it known that some state editorial association in an obscure and backward state or some convention of teachers of journalism—i.e., incompetent journalists who have given up the struggle—has met to formulate a code of journalistic ethics. Nothing more, of course, is ever heard of the matter. If, as sometimes happens, a sonorous and pious code is actually drawn up and signed in blood, it becomes as much a dead letter the day afterward as the Seventh Commandment or the Eighteenth Amendment. No American newspaper, so far as I am aware, has ever made any serious attempt to carry out the terms of any such code. The day one does so I shall be prepared to hear that the governors of the New York Stock Exchange have passed a resolution requiring stockbrokers to observe the Beatitudes.

The truth is that journalism, if it may be called a profession at all, is not a profession that is autonomous and privileged, and hence it cannot adopt and enforce standards of honor. It may be, in a furtive, disingenuous way, moral, but it cannot be honorable, for honor presupposes absolute freedom. The man of honor does this or refrains from doing that because he wants to, not because he has to. The minute external pressure is brought to bear upon him he ceases to be a man of honor, and becomes simply a moral man, which is to say, a slave and poltroon. The thing that forces a newspaper editor down to that level is the plain fact that he is not wholly his own man. Over him stands a superior power, without professional spirit and unreachable by professional discipline, to wit, the owner of his paper. No profession which stands under the shadow of any such power can maintain true professional dignity and autonomy. Above all, it cannot maintain professional standards of honor.

Thus journalistic codes of ethics are all moonshine. Essentially, they are as absurd as would be codes for street-car conductors, barbers or public jobholders. If American journalism is to be purged of its present swinishness and brought up to a decent level of repute—and God knows that such an improvement is needed—it must be accomplished by the devices of morals, not by those of honor. That is to say, it must be accomplished by external forces,

and through the medium of penalties exteriorly inflicted. Perhaps the most practicable of those forces is legislative enactment, though its growing weakness, chiefly from over-use, is apparent to all. Most of the offenses against decency that journalists commit—for example, the invasion of privacy, the spreading of false reports, and various scarcely concealed varieties of blackmail—would be greatly reduced if they were made misdemeanors, and even more radically reduced if the aggrieved parties were given adequate civil remedies by statute. We have more different criminal laws than any other civilized people and the penalties they carry are greater than are heard of anywhere else, but all the while our statutes against libel remain the loosest and most useless in the world. Even so, they would be infinitely more effective if they were not so badly crippled by the interference of the bad lawyers who sit upon our benches—most of them extremely sensitive to newspaper attack. These promoted shysters have polluted the law of libel with so many ifs and buts that it is now practically impossible for an aggrieved citizen to get substantial damages from a powerful newspaper. His own lawyer is commonly afraid to push his case, even within the limits of the emasculated law. He is lucky, indeed, if he gets off without having judge and district attorney join in railroading him to jail on some false charge in order to curry favor with the defendant.

So, as might be expected, two quite dissimilar points of view regarding journalistic codes are in evidence.

Fundamental Basis of Divergence in View

While indifference and opposition have played a large part in retarding the progress of journalism towards a higher level, they are not to be taken too seriously. Rightly understood they represent nothing more than that conservatism of human nature which must be disregarded by those with a taste for experiments in progress.

The disagreement is largely a matter of temperament. There are good men in both camps, but they are different as to the way they take hold on things.

For example, one type of man will hardly venture to drive outside the township without a road map in his pocket, and he consults it at every corner. His next door neighbor, on the other hand, will pick his way across a continent practically by instinct and enjoy every mile.

Or again, when the party of the first sort feels that his bodily machinery is getting out of order, he wants a doctor and a prescription and the directions written on the label in plain English. But the party of the second sort, who may be referred to as the intuitionist, is satisfied with a swig out of the first appropriate-looking bottle he can find in the medicine cupboard. And perhaps both of them get well at about the same time!

One type of man wants everything down in black and white. He may, without offence, be described as the ritualist, or the rationalist, or the formalist. The other has no use for explicit statement—the one-two-three way of reducing matters to a regular order. He says he is satisfied with the “spirit of the thing.”

One man is a system “fan”; the other is too busy for system—any system beyond the single principle that the way to get things done is to do them.

And thus we find the admirable human race divided, more or less definitely, into two types: the black-and-whiters and the take-things-as-they-comers; or, as they might be designated, the rule-and-regulationists and the catch-as-catch-can easy-goers. Both kinds are estimable people. Both are more or less right. Neither has any call to feel hard towards the other.

The Position of the Editor

And now, from the standpoint of these two divisions of humanity, consider the editor—for in spite of what folks think and say about him, he is still allowed to remain in the human race and exemplify its moods and differences.

In what ways does the editor manifest his portion of the common heritage of “temperament” in the day-by-day pursuit of his vocation? And why and how does it matter?

Obviously it does not matter how he asserts his temperamental predilections in what may be described as his personal affairs or in his manner of doing his day’s work, except as he comes into relations with other people. He may be systematic or erratic. He may be buoyant or phlegmatic. He may be a two cylinder gas engine or a turbine. But as he enters into relations with the community and the larger public he sheds the

insignificance that belongs to him as one unit among a multitude. He takes on a social importance. He stands, without exaggeration, as the keeper of many destinies. He no longer lives unto himself. His rules of conduct become at once matters of some moment.

Whether or not he would plead guilty to the charge, every editor carries with him a philosophy of life—a bundle of principles of action which determine and explain his orbit—and this philosophy is, from the nature of his function in the world, a public matter. It constitutes his code, and from it are derived his habits of conduct. Orderly relations between people are maintained only by such codes. Relations beget questions of ethics; complex relations, such as a journalist accepts for his part in life, involve correspondingly complex questions of ethics.

The journalist who says, as some do, that he is not aware of having to face any ethical problems is not even fooling himself. He knows better, but likes the pose. The editor who says—as one editor recently said with swaggering bravado—that his ethical code consists of the one maxim, "Get the money," is merely momentarily befuddled by his own smartness. Like it or not, the editor is still a human pack animal and his pack bulges with ethical paraphernalia, some of it badly battered perhaps, some of it tawdry, some of it damaged by exposure to all kinds of weather, none of it insurable at anything like its first cost, but ethical contraptions nevertheless.

Now, however, comes the parting of the ways. Now comes Old Mother Nature and separates the sheep from the other sheep—the goats in the flock are really too few to count.

On the one hand she puts the intuitionists, who boil their eggs by guess—and get them done about right, too. On the other hand she puts the rationalists who have no confidence in a boiled egg that hasn't been timed by the clock.

The one manages his paper—and sometimes says other editors ought to manage their papers—through an enlightened expediency guided by a sense of justice. As one editor puts it, "I handle each case as it comes up, following a certain 'woman's instinct' as to what is the right thing to do." Or, as another

says, "I use only the Davy Crockett precept: 'Be sure you're right, then go ahead.'"

But Some Editors Believe in Codes

The other type of editor has his ethical notions somewhat carefully formulated to meet the exigencies of the publisher's day. Perhaps he prints a sort of code under the flag on the editorial page, or he placards it in the news room, or puts it into a Style Book. In any case he talks and votes for the adoption of a formal code of ethics by the editorial association to which he belongs. He gets things down in black and white.

The intuitionist rarely contends that there is any harm in promulgating codes of ethics, though one editor did say recently that a newspaper which "flaunts a code is usually trying to put something over on the public." If there is now and then a hypocrite who cloaks unprofessional practices under a code of ethics, surely there is also, now and then, an intuitionist who does the "right" thing in the "easiest way." In all departments of life explicit standards invite hypocrisy, but they do not create hypocrites nor for very long afford them shelter. And the black-and-whiter feels that there are weighty reasons—much more important than his own personal preferences—why journalism should assert specifically its convictions as to the rules that ought to govern its conduct.

One of these reasons is, as he sees it, that the public is, to a considerable degree, unfair to the newspaper because of ignorance as to conditions of newspaper production; because of indifference as to the editor's conception of his job; and because of an easy facility in shirking its share of responsibility for the character of the press.

He believes that a better understanding in all these directions can be promoted by publicity for the editor's best convictions as to the place of journalism in the scheme of things and the standards to be upheld by journalists. He believes in advertising one's good intentions. He believes that a code of ethics is good advertising. He perhaps has a notion that a better understanding between public and press might lead to more of a partnership in developing the best possible social

organ of publicity. He may even figure that anything that builds up public confidence in newspapers builds greater prosperity for newspapers.

Or he may be chiefly interested in the influence of a code within the newspaper world itself. In this world, as in any other world, he finds some men equipped with broader horizons than others. Some with better vision than others. Some who are keenly appreciative of the professional aspects of journalism, and others who insist that publishers are engaged in business and nothing but business. He finds some who are not afraid to be called idealists, and others who are so intensely practical that they need an active public opinion within their own group to help them keep straight.

Publicly avowed standards, he feels, are a perpetual challenge to conduct, an educational force sure to bring results in practice. Such has been the influence of codes in medicine and to a less degree, in law, engineering, and teaching; why should not the rule hold in journalism?

The discussion and definition of standards is the necessary first step towards the invention of useful means for maintaining standards—witness, for example, the ingenious methods of insuring accuracy and fair play, the successful efforts to improve advertising, the effective machinery for securing dependable statements of circulation.

In the face of these considerations is it not advisable to give the black-and-whiters the benefit of the doubt? Even to encourage them a little?

One editor of a great metropolitan paper told an inquirer recently that the only code he finds desirable is "the simple doctrine of Jesus Christ." Another put it this way: "We think of this newspaper as if it were a person, an intelligent, courageous, well-bred gentleman, giving the best that is in him to his employer, the public." No sentiments could be finer; no guiding principles more worthy. But consider the efforts Christian peoples have devoted to translating "simple" Christian doctrine into forms concrete enough for practical human guidance. And consider whether the ideal of gentility is not somewhat vague, somewhat in need of more specific statement. After all, what

harm can the black-and-whiters do in trying to get things put down rather definitely on paper?

Anyhow, they are hard at work on the job. The trend of the times is with them. The trend in journalism is towards professional consciousness and better service to the public, and this trend will be accelerated by codification of generally approved principles.

And the intuitionist need not fear that definition of standards involves reducing everything to routine. Let him enjoy his laugh at the fancied editor of the future who when confronted by a request for suppression turns to page seventy-seven of his code book and finds out what to do. It is always fun to demolish straw men like that. But really, the intuitionist will always find use for his "woman's instinct," because even the best of human codes can throw light only a little way down a dark road. Let him join with the black-and-whiters and see what all of them working on the job together can bring forth! For years advertising men shied at psychology—yes, jeered at it. To-day, they claim it as their most intimate friend. Is it too much to hope that before long even the most hard-headed editor will get over being skittish and jumpy when somebody mentions ethics and an ethical code?

CHAPTER XV

THE INFLUENCE OF LAW

No one seems to be in any doubt that there is room for improvement in journalism, but many serious doubts arise when discussion of the means begins. A number of representative journalists were asked whether in their opinion journalism stands as high in public regard as medicine or law. A bare majority answered in the affirmative. And yet those who recognized the unsatisfactory conditions seemed to be without any program for betterment beyond that based on a general faith that the world is getting better. Less than five per cent of all the editors approached were willing to sanction remedial legislation of any sort.

Objections to Legal Measures

Legislating people to a higher plane, we are told, is the recourse of the impractical idealist. It does not work. Too many laws of that sort are on the statute books already. Making laws is a sort of fad. And, more specifically:

1. Laws in further regulation of the press would be sure to encroach on its freedom, and would therefore be unconstitutional. Present legal regulations of the press covering (1) copyright, (2) privacy, (3) civil libel, (4) criminal libel, (5) contempt are all that are necessary.

2. The persons who would make and administer such laws are the very ones most likely to desire relief from surveillance by the press, and therefore most eager to have some means of control and intimidation.

3. Journalism is regarded by those engaged in it as a business rather than a profession, and it is useless to attempt to erect professional standards by law until practitioners take the initiative.

4. Such legal standards, even in the case of medicine and law, have not been productive of satisfactory results. They would be still less so in the case of journalism, the services of which are less essential to society.

5. Other means of betterment such as public opinion, schools of journalism, adoption of codes of practice will take care of the problem.

Some of these objections have been considered in discussing independence, and the profession of journalism. Others will be taken up following this short survey of the main suggestions for further legal restrictions of journalism. We shall then be in position to attempt valuation of such proposals and of the general concept of press betterment through legal enactment.

Plans for Licensing Journalists

The most important of these proposals, because it is the one that undertakes to go to the root of the matter, is the one embodying some form of licensing for practitioners of journalism.

In 1914, Barrat O'Hara, lieutenant governor of Illinois, himself a newspaper writer, introduced into the Illinois legislature a bill embodying a licensing plan which Mr. O'Hara declared to be as much for the protection of the conscientious journalist as of the public. He conceived of it as a means of improving the personnel of journalism which, he argued, would remove the need and the demand for restrictive laws aimed at this or that particular newspaper abuse.

This bill provided for the creation of a state board of journalism, which should both issue and revoke licenses to practice the profession of journalism. A license should issue when the applicant had,

1. Reached legal age.
2. Completed the equivalent of a high school education.
3. Studied two years in a recognized college of journalism, or passed the same period of time in a newspaper office as an apprentice reporter.
4. Furnished the board with positive proof of good moral character; and,
5. Successfully passed an examination, in writing, conducted by the state board at regular intervals.

Adequate provision was made for the beginner, who might receive, on application to the board and proof of good moral character and an education equivalent to that in the ordinary high school, a certificate as an apprentice reporter. As such he might perform the usual work of the cub reporter, but would be disqualified from passing final judgment on his own and other person's copy. That is, he might write the items, but the same would be read and possibly revised by a licensed journalist before reaching the printer. Two years of such training and restriction, with the natural looking forward to the examinations ahead and the constant preparing for them, could scarcely fail to bring out the very best newspaper qualities in the young aspirant. Or the same period might be spent with equal profit in an approved and practical school of journalism.

A license, on the other hand, should be revoked:

1. Automatically, on the practitioner's conviction of a felony;
or,

2. After due filing of charges and trial by a jury of his fellow practitioners, for willful misrepresentation, malicious writing of scandal, acceptance of money or other prize tendered as bribe for the deliberate and unjustified coloring of news items, or other conduct unprofessional, reprehensible and dishonest.

The bill received little support from legislators or newspapers.

Publishers of western Washington in 1921 took steps towards the introduction of a bill in the legislature requiring licenses for newspaper executives, but were told by legal authorities that such a law would be held unconstitutional in that state.

The State Editorial Association of Pennsylvania, some years ago, considered asking the legislature to establish a state department of journalism which should issue certificates for the practice of journalism on the basis of the state education of journalists to be provided for in colleges or through home courses directed by the department.

Another example of the kind of legislation proposed to re-

strict the practice of journalism to persons duly licensed by the state was a bill introduced into the legislature of Oklahoma in 1923, but not enacted into law. The title of the act was:

An act creating a board of examiners for newspapermen and journalists; defining a newspaperman and journalist; providing that it shall be a profession; providing for a license for those of the profession so created; providing for the appointment of said board; defining its duties; providing rules and regulations for the licensee; providing for forfeiture of said license; providing fees for said license; making an appropriation therefor and providing for the punishment for violation of this act, and declaring an emergency.

Some of the more significant sections of the bill were:

No person shall practice the profession of newspaperman or journalist in the State of Oklahoma without first having procured a license from the board of examiners for newspapermen and journalists, as provided for in this act.

There is hereby created a board of examiners for newspapermen and journalists, to be composed of five members. The dean of the school of journalism of the State University shall be one member; the president of the State University shall be one member, both of whom shall serve without pay; and three members to be appointed by the governor, who shall serve during the tenure of office of the governor appointing them unless sooner removed for cause, as provided by law for the removal of other state officers. The governor shall designate one of the three appointed by him to be secretary of the board, who shall devote all of his time to the business of the office of said board, and who shall receive a salary of twenty-four hundred dollars per annum, payable monthly. All of the members appointed shall have had at least five years' active experience as newspapermen or journalists in the State of Oklahoma. Each member of said board shall take the oath of office prescribed for other state officers before entering upon the duties of office. The secretary shall not be connected with any newspaper or publication whatsoever while holding said office.

The board shall prescribe rules and regulations for the holding of examinations for all applicants, and minimum standards to be reached by all applicants before receiving a license to carry on said profession. Any graduate of any accredited school of journalism of this state or any other state may be licensed by said board in its discretion, without an examination, but said board may require all who apply for license to take its examination.

The board shall have authority, and it is hereby made its duty, to forfeit any license granted hereunder for the following reasons and in the following manner:

(a) When it shall be ascertained that any applicant made any false statements or representations in procuring his license.

(b) When any licensee is convicted of a crime against the laws of the State of Oklahoma involving moral turpitude.

(c) When any licensee becomes an habitual drunkard.

(d) When any licensee prints or causes to be printed, or permits the printing and publication of any story or news article about any citizen of this state or nation which is not true.

(e) When any licensee prints, or causes to be printed, or permits the printing and publication of any news article, story or editorial, which either directly or by insinuation, falsely charges any citizen of this state or nation with an act which hurts the standing or reputation of such citizen in the community or state or nation, either in a business or social way.

(f) When any licensee prints, causes to be printed or permits the printing and publication of any news item, editorial or story which is immoral or degrading.

Any one violating any of the provisions of this act shall be guilty of misdemeanor, and upon conviction thereof shall be punished by a fine of not less than fifty dollars, nor more than one thousand dollars, or by imprisonment.

Other sections covered procedure at examinations and at trials for disbarment.

A more conservative plan, from the standpoint of invocation of law, is that of giving legal recognition to such machinery for the improvement of journalism as may be set up by a national association or institute of journalists. This machinery would include provision for the education, examination, certification, discipline and disbarment of a journalist by authority of the profession itself. Legal authorization afterwards would make the plan effective.

As has been said by Rome G. Brown, a member of the bar and also for twenty-seven years an executive of the *Minneapolis Tribune*:

Such recognition and assistance by the law cannot be expected until the profession itself shall have properly organized and established within itself a recognized ethical code which can be said to be the expression as such of the entire profession itself. Its

standards for admission should be established above any consideration of politics, creed, race or sex. Until recognized and authorized under the law and until it procures the cooperation of the law, its discipline for misconduct could not extend any further than to an expulsion of membership, but it should make its privileges of admission to membership or of retention of membership with such requirements that the badge of its organization would be one sought by every journalist who had any hope or expectation of rising in his profession. It should be an emblem of the dignity and of the importance and high standards of a great profession, and, therefore, not only a badge of honor to its possessor, but a badge of marked distinction between the newspaperman who has it and the one who has it not.

Until such organization is provided, the profession of journalism never can have the recognition it deserves nor be safeguarded in the maintenance and protection of the high standards of professional culture and professional honor which are its ideals.

The question is, how long will society have to wait for journalists to take the initiative?

The Need for a Licensing System

Pleading for the erection of standards in journalism, Mr. Brown has thus described the need:

The most unprincipled, uneducated, untrained rascal who is able to procure the use of a press and buy newsprint may issue daily or weekly a dirty or yellow sheet, the only tendencies of which are to pervert public morals, and call it a "newspaper," and call himself a "journalist." This is true of the scandalous four-page sheet displaying the spoils of the hunt of sex-gossip mongers as also it is true of the purely yellow sheet or of the white sheet with yellow streaks, whose publishers cater only to readers of depraved tastes. The legal profession has its shysters, but the law and codes of the profession set them apart as such. The profession of medicine has its quacks and its confidence men, but they are segregated, or may be so, both under the law and by the organized action of the profession itself. And yet the great profession of journalism is without any authoritative protection either under the law or through its own organized action.

In this connection a remark by some one suggests itself, that there is great need of a word that means to the newspaper profession what shyster and quack mean to the professions of law and medicine.

William Allen White is one of a small number of editors who have indorsed the idea of licensing journalists:

Until the people of this country get it well in their heads that journalism is a profession which must be licensed and controlled, as the medical and legal professions are licensed and controlled, there can be no freedom of the press which is not liable to great abuses. . . . The most important thing in a democracy is the dissemination of intelligent information upon important matters. Until a man is equipped to know what are important matters and until he is trained to discuss important matters and disseminate facts intelligently, democracy is in danger. . . . When the newspaper business is socially controlled as medicine and law are, the freedom of our newspapers will be an asset. As it is, our freedom is a liability. Until journalism is recognized as a profession for trained men who have certain defined qualifications, the newspaper business will vacillate. Sometimes it will be an organ of predatory capitalism, sometimes the expression of class demagoguery—in both events a menace to stable government and growing institutions.

As to the Difficulties of Licensing

R. Justin Miller, professor of law in the University of Minnesota, thus analyzed the situation from the legal point of view, addressing a gathering of editors:

You have no doubt asked yourselves the question whether examinations and licensing are possible in connection with the profession of journalism. Let me suggest that you do not reject it as a possibility merely because of the difficulties which appear to stand in the way. All of your difficulties are present with the other professions, and many of them are still with us, even though we have ostensibly definitely established the practice.

Let me speak briefly of the outstanding difficulties in your way. First, there is the fact that the practice of the profession of journalism involves the possession of a large plant which in the case of the larger papers and magazines are usually in the hands of capitalists or large business organizations. These men frequently are not inspired with the professional spirit at all, but are interested in the financial returns from the advertising section, carrying the other departments along as a necessary evil. It would, of course, be impossible to put these men through examinations and licensing, and it must be confessed that so long as the voice of capital speaks so directly, there is not a proper chance for development of the professional spirit.

The same conditions prevail to a certain extent in the other professions. It takes a very substantial outlay of capital to equip a modern city law office, with its library, filing system, and the mechanical devices to be found therein. The same can be said of the physician's office, with its X-ray machine, its examination table, its library, its automobiles, etc. And the same can be said also of the teaching profession. Although the teacher generally finds his expensive equipment installed at the expense of the public, he finds it controlled by boards of trustees, or regents who represent frequently the same type of business mind as the owner of the newspaper plant.

Now, although the young lawyer or the young doctor can go to a small town and open a small inexpensive office, or the young teacher can rent a building and run his own private school, so can the young journalist buy a hand press, set his own type, and print a country weekly. If he wants to get into the big city organization then, he must take what he finds and do the best he can to build up the standards in which he believes.

The point I make is that he finds no different a situation than does the young professional in any line, and that the man who undertakes to improve the morals of any profession must take it for granted that he is doomed to disappointment, so far as making any substantial change is concerned, when he works with the entrenched ignorance and prejudices of those business men who frequently control the plants of big city offices. This, however, does not make it impossible to examine and license the new applicants. If a concerted demand were made for legislation requiring such procedure, it could no doubt be secured.

Evolution of Legal Requirements in the Profession of Law

Highly illuminating is the account of the steps in the development of the licensing system in law as described by Henry W. Jessup, a distinguished New York lawyer:

At first an oath was deemed all sufficient. It is a sad commentary upon the profession itself that it took a century before the American bar as a whole came to the consciousness of the fact that it must, in addition to such oath, erect standards or canons of ethics; that it must publish those standards to the community at large, so that men could know, not only what they could expect of lawyers, but what lawyers were expecting of one another and what the courts could require of them. And it has taken nearly a generation since this formulation of canons was first mooted for the courts themselves to depart from the narrow precedents of

former decisions which tended to restrict their power over lawyers to penal lines (that is to say, lawyers were to be disbarred only if they had broken the statute of the state forbidding the doing of some particular thing). But now judicial decisions east and west are beginning to embody recognition by the judges that when a member of the bar indulges in indecent solicitation of business, or undignified advertisement of his wares, or in other breaches of our canons, the courts will assume that such a lawyer may be censured, suspended or disbarred for violation of the canons in force in the profession. We have, thank God, reached the stage when a lawyer must respect "the essential dignity of the profession" as well as the Mosaic Decalogue and the penal law of his state.

It seems reasonably clear that the most serious difficulty with any plan for licensing journalists—the only really serious difficulty—lies in the danger that the machinery for regulation might be used by politicians to punish and muzzle unfriendly newspapers and newspaper writers. The Illinois plan perhaps has fewer safeguards in this direction than the Oklahoma plan. Neither may be entirely safe. But does not the urgency of the need justify experimentation—a persistent effort to solve the problem? Important steps have been taken recently within the profession of journalism to establish standards. Is it not time for that profession to seek the coöperation of the law?

Minor Efforts at Legal Restrictions

Educational in value, and all pointing to the need of the more fundamental enactments just considered are a number of laws and proposed laws dealing with particular phases of newspaper publication. They are all aimed at symptoms rather than the disease itself. They are enumerated here merely as affording an understanding of public sentiment towards newspapers.

1. The Michigan legislature of 1923 enacted a law excluding certain information from newspapers:

It shall be unlawful for any person, or for the officers, agents, servants, or employes of any corporation, directly or indirectly, individually or by agent, servant, or employee, or by means of any newspaper, poster, periodical, or other production, to write, print, publish, advertise, deliver or distribute or offer to deliver or dis-

tribute to the public or to any part thereof or to any person, any statement or information concerning the making or laying of wagers or bets or the selling of pools or evidences of betting odds on any race, contest, or game or on the happening of any event not known by the parties to be certain or any purported event of like character.

Public sentiment was strongly behind the bill as were also most of the newspapers of the state. It passed by a practically unanimous vote.

2. A bill was introduced into the United States Senate in 1913 making it unlawful to publish in the District of Columbia details of crimes and accidents. The author of the bill supported it with lengthy arguments against the evil of anti-social news, but said in closing:

It is an evil which I admit can not be overcome by law. It must be met by a better and purer public sentiment that will demand cleaner and more reliable journalism. . . . Federal legislation on the subject must of necessity be limited in its scope and effect. It would mean more as an example and as a national expression of condemnation of corrupt and unreliable journalism and approval of clean journalism and a powerful stimulant of a better and more exalted public sentiment than as a practicable, enforceable penal or restrictive law.

The State of Indiana has a law similar in purpose:

It shall be unlawful for any person to sell, or offer for sale, or to print or publish, or to bring into this state for the purpose of selling, giving away, or otherwise disposing of, or to circulate in any way, any paper, book, or periodical, the chief feature or characteristic of which is the record of the commission of crime, or to display by cut or illustration crimes committed, or the acts or pictures of criminals, desperadoes, or of men or women in lewd and unbecoming positions or improper dress.

Any person guilty of violation of this act shall be fined not less than \$10 and not more than \$200.

3. A Washington correspondent wrote a story regarding alleged excessive use of money by a national political organization in the campaign of 1920. Summoned before a Senate investigating committee he refused to name the source of his information. After much futile questioning, he was excused. Reporters and editors have been sent to jail for refusal to

divulge the source of their information. Newspapers conducting vice crusades have been threatened with legal penalties because they published matters of common knowledge but not of first hand information constituting legal evidence and because they refused to give the names of their informants.

Cases of this sort have given rise to the belief in the minds of many journalists that information given to a reporter should be recognized in law as a privileged communication duly protected as in the case of statements made to a lawyer by his client or to a minister by a communicant.

Other suggestions made by individuals or groups outside of journalism consist of advocacy for:

4. Further restrictions on "trial by newspaper."

5. Prohibition of publication of the details brought out in divorce trials.

6. A law providing that, except in case of special permission, a newspaper should not publish an interview until it had been approved by the subject of the interview.

7. A requirement that errors shall be corrected in the same position in the paper and with the same prominence as the original article containing the error.

8. Compulsory publication of letters to the paper.

9. A law requiring accuracy through the provision that, "Whoever shall publish in a newspaper a statement wilfully misrepresenting the facts, or shall publish as facts statements known to them to be untrue or shall publish erroneous statements through gross carelessness shall be guilty of a misdemeanor."

10. A law, modeled on a Florida statute, providing that a newspaper desiring to print an attack on a candidate for office shall submit the article to him and grant him equal space for reply in the issue in which the attack appears.

Responsibility of News Sources

Recognition that at least a part of the inaccuracies in newspapers are due to careless informants was embodied in the following bill introduced into the New York legislature in 1920 and enacted into law:

Any person who knowingly and wilfully states, delivers or transmits by any means whatever to any manager, editor, pub-

lisher, reporter or other employee of a publisher of any newspaper, magazine, publication, periodical or serial, any false and untrue statement of a fact concerning any person or corporation, with intent that the same shall be published, is guilty of misdemeanor.

The particular abuse at which the law was aimed was the victimizing of newspapers by press agents of persons and concerns seeking favorable publicity for themselves, or unfavorable publicity for competitors, and undertaking to achieve it by means of ingenious fake stories.

A similar law has been adopted in the State of Minnesota. In neither state is the law anything more than an "educational" influence.

It is not to be expected that all newspapers will agree on any one restrictive measure—part of the public objects to sanitary measures, quarantine, educational requirements—but unless a guaranty of improvements can be given through some general measure such as a licensing system, legal restrictions of a specific nature are sure to be a perpetual threat, or worse, of a dissatisfied public.

CHAPTER XVI

INFLUENCE OF PROFESSIONAL TRAINING

When the belief is expressed that college training in journalism is exerting a beneficial influence on newspaper practice, some editors heartily endorse the notion, some agree to it through courtesy, and others ridicule it. But practically all of them profess to believe that in the not distant future the influence of schools and departments of journalism will be noticeable generally.

All of them admit that the demands made upon the young reporter are so great as to call into use whatever he possesses of ability and education. Indeed, as remarked by Paul Bellamy, of the *Cleveland Plain Dealer*, they are often unreasonable: "We too often expect these young chaps to be equally competent in one moment to interview a bishop of the church, and in the next to cover a murder, and then go write a story on the Einstein theory. It takes in too much territory."

Professional training in journalism began in colleges and universities hardly more than two decades ago. While the growth in the number of departments and students has been rapid, the period during which the number of graduates annually contributed to journalism has been large is too short as yet to justify great expectations. Many of these graduates have worked up into executive positions, but, relatively, their number is small. Those who have acquired newspapers are, in almost all cases, country publishers and editors.

Professional Education in Journalism

It would hardly be becoming in departments of journalism to make broad assertions as to leavening the newspaper lump. That achievement, if it ever is accomplished, should be heralded by the press itself, which alone can lend authenticity to such a

claim. But departments of journalism may properly set forth the aims cherished by them and the methods used in pursuit of such aims.

To describe the service that such departments undertake to accomplish for their students, it is necessary to analyze the curriculum usually found in such schools. It is roughly divisible into three parts: general knowledge and training, technical knowledge and training, principles and ethics.

1. The general knowledge and training received by a graduate in journalism is not essentially different from that received by any student in the college of liberal arts and sciences. His selection of courses may be influenced in certain obvious directions by his need for education bearing rather directly on the present and his further need for comprehensiveness in this field rather than specialization—though the function of the school of journalism in supplying specialists, able to write authoritatively on some one subject, is not to be overlooked.

This general education has already received the approval of the newspaper world. The newspaper executive who still places a discount on the college man or woman is something of a curiosity. The benefits of the influx into newspaper offices of college men and women, whether trained in journalism or not, is too obvious to admit of discussion.

2. The technical knowledge and training in schools of journalism is afforded by courses relating to every important department of newspaper work—news, editorial, advertising, publishing, etc. The classroom work in these courses includes discussions of theory, criticism of newspapers, practical exercises. Outside the classroom, students practise on a "laboratory newspaper"—or its equivalent—and write for outside publications. They read books and make investigations. All their work is criticised thoroughly by teachers who know their subjects from a practical standpoint.

Few teachers of journalism claim that a student so trained has greater facility in his work than an equally talented reporter who has gained experience in newspaper offices. But he obtains his experience while in college, and upon graduation is prepared to make more rapid advancement than would other-

wise be possible. His broad view of newspaper practice is also valuable in affording ideas for meeting the requirements of his later work. He has studied and tried, in some cases, a dozen ways of doing the same thing. His influence in journalism, therefore, should be towards the adoption of the better methods. He does not begin by telling his superior how to run the paper, but he has command of resources that count sometimes in a doubtful situation. He is by no means in the position of a man who has attempted to learn steamship navigation by reading a book. On his departmental daily paper he has taken his trick in the pilot house and knows the "feel" of the wheel. He knows something about allowing for effects of wind and waves and current, and can recognize signs of shallow water. Possibly classroom "fogs" have prepared him to find his way through the haze that sometimes gathers around the newspaper executive's desk.

This technical education receives the endorsement of a growing number of journalists, and not usually because of any misconception that it is merely trade-school training. In the words of Harrison Robertson, of the *Louisville Courier Journal*: "In the future the majority of our journalists, our true journalists, are to come from our colleges and our schools of journalism. Young men who take journalism so seriously as to prepare for it as they would prepare for any other profession are those to whom we must look to establish journalism properly and permanently as the peer of any profession."

The Ethical Element

Ethics is necessarily taught in all parts of a truly practical course in journalism. A diagram might be made showing the per cent of each journalistic subject that is likely to be devoted to a discussion of ethical questions. It would be found, perhaps, that in a course in reporting twenty-five per cent of the time and attention of the class is given to matters of ethics. The same is true of a course in copyreading. The percentage is even higher in a course in editorial writing, and so on.

Specific courses devoted to ethics fall into two classes. The first, ethics combined with history. "History and Principles

of Journalism," is a favorite name for such a course. The other group consists of courses bearing the name of "Ethics of Journalism" or "Editorial Problems and Policies."

Both types of course doubtless have a place in any curriculum in journalism.

The special course in ethics comes in the last year. In this course, all the ideas on newspaper problems which have been assimilated by the student in his various classes are assembled and organized and amplified into the beginnings, at least, of a philosophy of journalism.

There are four kinds of material to be brought into such a course. First, an introductory consideration of the general principles of ethics. Second, consideration of the ethics of journalism. This consists of the enumeration of the major ethical problems that confront editors, and the discussion of theories of ethics as applied to such problems. These two divisions of the course might be described as the theoretical or survey section.

The third element of the course may well consist of actual cases presented to the class by men and women engaged in journalistic work. The instructor may gather this material by correspondence. The facts in each case are given to the class, briefs are prepared, and the decisions arrived at are compared and discussed.

The fourth element in the course is the result of the belief that the best way to make a lasting impression on a student's mind is by enabling him to put into practice the theory which he has formed. To this end problems are assigned to each student. Each student is asked to achieve some definite thing through his laboratory newspaper. Most of the students in the class have opportunity to work in one of the executive positions on the paper and their experience with questions involving newspaper policy are utilized in fixing ideals which might otherwise prove evanescent.

Of course, newspapers are studied as to their policies.

Then, too, the student of editorial problems and policies must labor to understand as much as possible about public opinion. A student of medicine must learn drugs and how to handle

surgical instruments, but the equally vital subject for him is the human body on which he expects to practice.

Not a Theoretical Course

"Do not students in schools of journalism give themselves too much concern over questions of ethics in the newspaper world?" asks one editor, with a regrettable trace of impatience.

Is it possible to feel too much concern about the kind of world to which one expects to give his life? If students were spending their time theorizing about an ideal world, the editor's satire might be justified. But they are not. They are studying conditions as they actually exist. Their ethics class is not one devoted to pleasant discourse, for the requisite number of semester hours, on the evils of yellow journalism, the objections to editorializing the news, the dishonesty of news suppression, the social obligation to handle crime stories in a constructive way, and other similar subjects. Such discussion is undoubtedly interesting. It may even be said to approach the old-fashioned classroom lecture as a "delightful form of respiration." But it is doubtful that such theorizing would bear fruit in the conduct of the student five years later when confronted by a real newspaper problem. The chief task before the instructor is to create an atmosphere of reality in the class room. This is not difficult, for one reason, because of the daily newspaper for practical work. And however great may be the quantitative differences between the problems in such a field and in the field of a great metropolitan newspaper, qualitatively the questions that arise day by day are the same.

A story of a case of expulsion for dishonesty is a crime story of the campus, and it is almost as serious a matter to the inhabitants of the campus as the story of a defalcation in a great bank is to the inhabitants of a city.

All the aspects of the problem of suppression are presented to the college editor.

Temptations to color the news are as urgent as they ever become in a larger newspaper office.

Opportunities for sensationalism present themselves every morning at the campus editor's desk.

And so on through the list of typical ethical questions.

All this being true, the problem of the instructor is merely to bridge the gap between his class room and the office of the paper.

It is all very practical. The editor who finds little difficulty in disposing of requests for suppression can probably recall that when he encountered his first demand of this sort, either as reporter or as executive, he did not react with the ease and assurance he feels now. It is not an easy thing to weigh with judicial mind the considerations that bear on whether or not to print a doubtful story: its value as news, its effect on public opinion, its value as a warning, its injury to the reputation of a woman, its influence on the future of a child, its punitive value, its suggestiveness, its relation to proceedings in court. Experience—sometimes expensive experience—teaches a journalist to weigh them. Would he not have profited by thinking these things over and talking with editors about them and formulating ideas about them before he was confronted by his first “case”?

As to an adequate supply of “clinical material,” hot from the newspaper griddle, editors and managing editors are always helpful.

Professional education in journalism does not monopolize the time of the student while in college. It merely affords him opportunity to acquire, along with his general education, a semi-technical training in the vocation he expects to follow. This helps him to correlate his general education with his professional requirements. It familiarizes him with the standards in journalism for the maintenance and advancement of which he as a college man is to be held responsible. It affords him an opportunity to become acquainted with the different branches of his vocation and therefore to make a wise selection. It develops his skill in technical matters. It creates a background for his life work.

Such, then, is the general character of the course in journalism. Until time affords concrete evidence of the flowering of this preparatory work when transplanted to the newspaper field, only deductively can its value be established, but it seems

to present a creditable case. Its general effect is thus forecast by the editor of the *Christian Science Monitor*:

As a professional training becomes required of those who would adopt journalism as the calling of a lifetime, that calling takes on the character of a learned profession. Perhaps insistence on this thesis is not important. If a man does good work, if he serves that portion of the world with which he is brought into business contacts efficiently, honorably, and well, it may be of the least importance to know whether he is following a profession, a handicraft, a business, or a trade. And yet when the effort of those who are endeavoring to set a high standard for the calling of journalism is impeded by the plea that they are seeking to subject it to rules and regulations of conduct which should apply only to the learned professions, the time comes to determine whether it is not entitled to be thus classified.

No calling, no profession, demands a higher sense of responsibility to the general public than this. In none is every bit of education, academic or technical, so valuable as in the making of a daily newspaper. In no profession are the opportunities so great for the man devoid of any professional sense of honor and integrity to prey upon the weaknesses of his fellow-beings, and in none is the chance of the upright man for honorable and useful service greater. If there be any calling which it should be the study of its practitioners to elevate to the standing of a true profession, and to surround with the protection of a guiding code of ethics, it is this calling of the journalist.

Other Points of Contact

The existence of newspapers, on the one hand, and schools and departments of journalism, on the other, side by side in the same field, or at least in the same realm of human interests, creates a situation somewhat different from that in any other profession. For here are two types of institution interested in the same things, though from different angles, exerting a considerable influence on each other and likely to become more and more interdependent.

Schools of law have no such complementary institutions. Lawyers are not institutional in character—not even the greatest of law firms. The lives of individual lawyers are not subordinated to the life of an institution as are the lives of many individual journalists. The lawyer can not regard the law

school as a force exerting influences on the future of a permanent organization of which he is a part, for he is not a part of any such organization. He cannot regard schools of law as feeders for an institution to the future prosperity of which he is devoted.

Likewise in the profession of medicine, almost the only relation that exists between the practitioner in the field and the school of medicine is the relation of a graduate to his alma mater.

Even in the field of religion where two closely related institutions stand side by side—the divinity school and the church—the situation is not comparable to that in the journalistic world.

As a result of this unique situation, there is more than the one channel through which schools of journalism may exert a beneficial influence upon the press.

Fostering a Literature of the Profession

Casper S. Yost has pointed out that :

Journalism schools may also render a great service to the profession generally by fostering a demand for technical literature of journalism. The other professions have great libraries of books embodying the experience and the thought of their best minds through ages. No doctor or lawyer, no preacher or educator thinks of entering upon his profession without surrounding himself with a collection of such books. Journalism is virtually bookless.

The newspaper editor of to-day has no authorities that he may consult, no experience but his own to guide him. There are for him no accumulated stores of professional learning and wisdom. No masters of the science or art of journalism have left a record to aid. He must draw all that he requires out of himself. Journalism needs to be studied in the mass and the results of study recorded. It needs the storing up of individual experience to make it accessible and beneficial to others.

It needs, in short, a literature of its own. Conceive, for example, the value of a critical history of journalism, showing its development and the reasons for it, showing the part it has played in the struggle for liberty everywhere, showing its influence in the progress of mankind, its spiritual as well as its material progress, showing the absolute necessity of the press, a free press, in the dissemination of information, in the protection of public rights,

in the promotion of public welfare, in the preservation of democracy.

What a stimulus it would be to every worker in the profession; what a revelation it would be to the people. The newspaper is the greatest instrument of public service that has been developed by men. We need a larger realization of the quality and the obligation of our inheritance, and the people need a better understanding of the value of journalism in the protection and advancement of the public interests.

Educating a Critical Public

The responsible journalist whose interests are broader than his daily balance sheets finds significance, and even cheer, in the fact that schools of journalism are leading large numbers of young people—and older people as well—to form a more just estimate of the newspaper, to understand it better, to read it more critically, to give preference to what is worthy. Here is a force of gathering power which both from the inside—as it comes to be exerted from the inside—and also from the outside, in the form of an intelligently critical public, is bound to make itself felt, in the direction of a national journalism that shall be a more serviceable social organ.

In some states the good will between press and school is further advanced by reciprocal services of one sort and another. For example, the school seeks the answer to some newspaper's problem through surveys made by students; the editor conducts discussion groups in the school. The school strains out the unfit and has on call competent beginners; the newspaper gives them jobs.

Journalism as a Career

In considering vocations, the young man of serious mind is attracted to those that promise him a well-rounded life.

One superiority that journalism has over other arts or professions is that in it men and women may use to good advantage all their knowledge, powers, and possessions. The whole man may be on the job—must be on the job. Such breadth and inclusiveness of opportunity makes strong appeal.

But the young man also looks for the possibility of distinction in some special field.

Here again journalism is full of promise. More and more do recognition and recompense await specially trained or specially gifted writers.

Again, the young man with a fairly sane scale of values wishes a vocation in which some sort of balance may be maintained between the pursuit of his own selfish interests and his purposes of altruism or social improvement.

Journalism is fairly satisfactory as to the first and limitless in regard to the second.

In the matter of individual tastes—likes and dislikes for certain kinds of work—journalism exhibits such diversities as to afford a place for almost any man, except the one who does not care to participate actively in affairs beyond the range of his individual concerns.

Like other vocations journalism runs on different levels. At its best financially and otherwise, it is worthy of any man's lifetime devotion. At its worst financially, it is about two degrees above the poor house. At its worst ethically, it is about two degrees below the business of poisoning wells.

As to whether city journalism or country journalism offers the greatest opportunities, there is surely no absolute answer.

The meaning of opportunity depends on a man's scale of values—on his philosophy of life.

The opportunity to get rich is not opportunity at all to the young man—by no means rarely found—who cares more for other things. And the opportunity to be a master builder of community well-being in a small city is not opportunity at all to the young man who gets more joy out of being an indispensable, though perhaps small, factor in a great metropolitan newspaper organization.

If the young man looks through the list of owners and high executives of great city papers and great class publications, marking those who began life as reporters without financial means, he will perhaps conclude that the great rewards in journalism—measured quantitatively by number of dollars and spread of reputation and influence—are reserved for those who go to the cities. But, of course, he should compare this number with the total number of young men who started as re-

porters. He should make an honest estimate of his own chances according to the law of probabilities.

Then, if he looks over the list of country editors and marks those who, starting as reporters without financial means, have acquired a competence, and those who have a spread of influence as broad as their state, and in some cases as broad as the nation, he may decide that, after all, opportunity is about equal, measured quantitatively.

If he proceeds to a qualitative analysis of opportunity in the two fields, he will perhaps find the advantage with the country editor who is at least his own man and whose success or failure is his own success or failure.

CHAPTER XVII

OTHER MEANS OF IMPROVEMENT

The adoption of standards by the profession of journalism itself; legislation looking to the enforcement of such standards; the development of professional education—these three influences seem to give most promise of reversing certain tendencies inimical to the press as a social organ. But there are several other factors of which account should be taken.

Effects of Demands by the Public

Reference has been made in passing to the demands for betterment presented by individuals and groups. In one large city, representative citizens signed an open letter to the local editors asking that they be given papers fit to take into the home. One national organization of women has a standing committee on purity of the press. The pulpit is a frequent critic of the press. Unreasonable as these criticisms often are; true as it is that men buy the newspapers in which they know they will find the sensational and the yellow, and then criticise the papers for printing the stuff, nevertheless criticisms are salutary—and are so regarded by thoughtful journalists.

But criticism ought not to fall equally on the just and the unjust as is the fashion with wholesale condemnation. And the critic should come into court with clean hands—should express himself with the restraint and fairness and decency which he demands of the newspaper. The injustice that editors sometimes see in trivial complaints was explained by one editor in the form of a "statement of account between Mr. Average Citizen and his newspaper." On the credit side were itemized sundry expressions of good will beginning with the notice of his birth and covering his various graduations, entrance into business, marriage, birth and death of child, mis-

takes not mentioned, etc. On the debit side was "a little editorial to which he takes exception; some little policy with which he does not entirely agree; a little mistake of judgment on the part of the paper, some very human failure which any one might make." And Mr. Average Citizen regards the account as balanced. "He owes his newspaper not a kindly thought, and he will get even if it's the last thing he does. The newspaper was always crooked, anyway."

Influence of an Official Pacemaker

A newspaper published by the national government, but broader in function than the official gazettes of some other countries, is a favorite suggestion of some advocates of reform; but the career of the Official Bulletin of the United States during the World War has been so generally pronounced unsatisfactory that—fairly or unfairly—that form of experiment has been rendered impossible for some decades to come. Nevertheless the proposal for a journalism by the state, so warmly defended by Charles Walston, is by no means a notion to be entirely discarded.

The experiments with newspapers published by municipalities have been so disastrous that it is safe to say the Los Angeles *Municipal News*, which lived one year, will be the last of that type of publication for some time. The plans for that model daily were thus described by its managing editor, George H. Dunlop:

Each political party polling three per cent of the vote of the city has the right to use one column in each issue of the paper, free of charge, for the purpose of setting forth the views of that party on public questions. The governing committee of each party selects its own editor, to edit its column, and the matter he hands in for publication is free from any censorship by the management of the paper except that such matter must be lawful for publication. The mayor and any member of the city council may each have the use of half a column in any issue of the paper.

The Los Angeles *Municipal News* is under the control of the municipal newspaper commission, composed of three citizens, who serve without pay. The commissioners are appointed by the mayor and confirmed by the council.

Endowed Newspapers as Models

The dream of an endowed newspaper still offers an appealing opportunity for philanthropy—liberal philanthropy it would need to be. Labor groups and political groups have experimented in this direction with some success, but their papers have been endowed for purposes of propaganda. The hope expressed by some journalists is that an endowment may be made for the opposite purpose—providing for a newspaper without bias and without fear. Hamilton Holt has set the amount necessary to endow a newspaper at five million dollars. He suggests that, "The money to endow such a great national weekly should be given outright to a board of trustees composed of the most eminent men of different political parties and social classes, whose duties should consist in supervising the finances and selecting the managing editor and seeing that the journal lives up to its principles. The functions of the board should correspond to those of the trustees of a university."

Demonstrations of the Ideal

From time to time ministers have undertaken to edit an issue or a week's issues of some newspaper in order to demonstrate how it should be done in accordance with Christian principles. Charles M. Sheldon's "demonstration" with the Topeka (Kansas) *Daily Capital*, in 1900, attracted world attention because of the prominence of Dr. Sheldon. Other instances have passed unnoted. Newspapers usually agree to such arrangements because of their publicity value rather than with any genuinely constructive aims. The conditions governing the performance are necessarily such as to make it little more than a sort of hopeless gesture, with possibly some local value in setting people to thinking. No such model has surpassed in any respect the daily issues, year in and year out, produced by at least one newspaper staff in America, and closely approximated by others.

A more ambitious undertaking was the *American Daily Standard*, established in Chicago a few years ago, with care-

ful provision for gathering and publishing the news "in accordance with the principles of Christianity." The paper continued three months, during which time it had the character less of a general newspaper than of a vehicle for church news. In discontinuing its publication its editor made this announcement:

The *American Daily Standard* has tried to meet the wishes of those people who profess to be dissatisfied with newspapers as they are. We have put out a Christian paper—a paper that was clean, truthful and unbiased. The Christian leaders and high class business men of this town have failed us utterly.

James Schermerhorn, formerly publisher of the *Detroit Times*, announced his purpose to conduct a Golden Rule newspaper. He sold it shortly after the completion of its twenty-first year, declaring that ethical journalism lacks a constituency.

Little permanent benefit seems to come from these attempted demonstrations, notwithstanding the entire sincerity of those responsible for them. Journalism needs, rather, to be continually responsive to the best influences of its own greatest practitioners. The examples furnished by its brilliant men have always proved most potent in developing any profession.

Official Authentication of News

Much more acceptable than the idea of an official newspaper is that of an agency of government or of the press—or several such agencies—by which information may be dug out of hidden or inaccessible places and digested into form suitable for the uses of the press. Something of the sort is now done by press agents in the various departments, but their methods have attracted the fire of critics both within and without journalism. Each press agent is looking out for the interests of one department or one man. He is suspected of being a propagandist. He comes between the newspapers and the sources of authoritative information. His "hand-outs" discourage investigation of original news sources by reporters. In the minds of its advocates, Walter Lippman and others, the plan for a digesting bureau would avoid these evils.

At least one privately maintained attempt in the same direc-

tion has been made. The Citizens' Federal Research Bureau was organized in Washington, in 1924, by Frank A. Vanderlip, "to make a scientific, independent, and impartial investigation of the federal government and place the findings before the bar of public opinion," with the announced intention of making it eventually a "newspaper organization, with a managing editor and a staff of trained newspaper men as investigators."

Improvement in Personnel

Writing on "Why I'm quitting newspaper work," Harmon Postlewhite declares that:

The trouble with the press is the men who feed its columns. Without moral backbone, without ideals, without a sense of justice or fair play, they are poisoning the minds of such people as put any trust in the daily newspapers. In the minds of others they are irrigating the seeds of distrust that make each man suspect his neighbor. Living in a false atmosphere is in part responsible for this reactionary attitude.

Unfair as it is to make so sweeping a statement, there is yet ground for considering seriously the proposition: get better reporters and journalism will be better; and then as journalism improves reporters will do better work since they will respect their work more. A managing editor thus condemns one demoralizing practice:

I am fairly filled with indignation when I encounter in print, day after day, cheapening lines penned by the men, themselves insulted, who in turn spread before their readers the record of their own mortifying experiences. Of course, we have disagreeable things to do. We go up against all manner of men, often too, under circumstances that are embarrassing, not to say degrading. People who lack breeding or sense, or both, sometimes assume an offensive attitude toward us, but why parade the fact before the world? Why encourage other morons to do the same thing?

How can a reporter respect a job that requires of him crookedness in more or less flagrant form, from stealing photographs to coloring a story? How can he help respecting a job that requires of him scrupulous care, as in the submission of an interview for the approval of the person interviewed, before

publication, a practice more and more in effect in newspaper offices. "We preach to one another clean journalism and endeavor to practice it," is the succinct description one city editor gives of the fine spirit in his staff.

Improvement in working conditions will reduce the percentage of those who intend merely to use newspaper work as a stepping-stone. Few care to grow old in a newspaper office. Schools of journalism will operate towards curing this evil; but the only permanent cure is a higher scale of wages. Underpayment is responsible for a high rate of turnover in most newspaper offices. The resultant burden of breaking in new men, strangers in the field and therefore incapable of a high degree of accuracy, is greater than an adequate wage scale would be.

Another encouragement to pride in achievement is a liberal policy as to "by" lines. The newspaper's traditional fear of allowing a reporter or department editor to create a personal following which might enable him to command a higher salary is perhaps defensible on business grounds; but it is damaging to journalism and stimulates "graduation" into vocations more attractive to individual ambition.

Influence of Organization

The newspaper world, besides its many organizations for business purposes, has a number of groups banded together for mutual benefits and for improvement in the profession of journalism. The Institute of Journalists of Great Britain was perhaps the first to exert an appreciable influence; the National Association of Newspaper Editors in this country is the youngest undertaking of the sort. At least two active organizations are the outgrowth of the American system of journalistic education: Sigma Delta Chi, for men, and Theta Sigma Phi for women. Both labor for the ideals of professional responsibility. Organizations of the labor union type have been attempted with meagre success. It is difficult to see why there might not be developed in this country an organization like the Institute of Journalists or the National Union of Journalists, in England, both of which have operated successfully.

Encouragement of New Papers

Resistance by the public to the tendency towards newspaper consolidations has been urged as vital to the preservation of an independent and honest press. Such consolidations, especially in larger centers, are by some regarded as steps towards dangerous monopoly of the channels of public information. The opportunity of the public to exert influence in such matters seems slight, beyond lending encouragement to newly established papers, particularly the small personal organ, modeled after the French press, which is regarded by some as a hope of the future.

Improvement of business methods used by small publishers is regarded as so important to the betterment of the papers themselves that some departments of journalism offer the services of an expert free to any editor who will install a modern cost finding and efficiency system in his plant.

Exchange of editors for a few months at a time has been proposed as a constructive device for journalism.

Such are some of the remedial suggestions that have been made. It is well that they should be hospitably received and never dismissed until all hope of their utility is dead.

Measurements of Attainment

Visions of the ideal have fascination for some. Others find them irritating. Aiming at the stars is to some an impractical proceeding; while others look upon it according to the doctrine of Edwin E. Slosson: "The reason why a star is good to aim at is because you can never reach it. An ideal ceases to be an ideal when it is realized. Whatever you may choose for your ideal, be sure that it is so distant from the earth that there is no parallax to confuse your sight."

Both an exemplification and a description of the ideal newspaper were made in 1908 by George Harvey at the time of his Bromley lectures at Yale University. His ideal newspaper, the *Bromley Morning News*, was issued as an exhibit to go with the lectures. Both attracted wide attention.

Perhaps the most dignified and lofty statement of the char-

acteristics of ideal journalism is that prepared by F. N. Scott for inscription on the building erected not long ago for the *Detroit News*:

Mirror of the public mind; interpreter of the public intent; troubler of the public conscience.

Reflector of every human interest; friend of every righteous cause; encourager of every generous act.

Bearer of intelligence; dispeller of ignorance and prejudice; a light shining into all dark places.

Promoter of civic welfare and civic pride; bond of civic unity; protector of civic rights.

Scourge of evil doers; exposé of secret iniquities; unrelenting foe of privilege and corruption.

Voice of the lowly and oppressed; advocate of the friendless; righter of public and private wrongs.

Chronicler of acts; sifter of rumors and opinions; minister of the truth that makes men free.

Reporter of the new; remembrancer of the old and tried; herald of what is to come.

Defender of civic liberty; strengthener of loyalty; pillar and stay of democratic government.

Upbuilder of home; nourisher of the community spirit; art, letters and science of the common people.

Many others have tried their hands at painting the ideal newspaper. One of them, Waldo P. Warren, has described it thus:

The home newspaper. It is a paper which is so full of good thoughts for every member of the family that it finds a warm welcome wherever it goes. It is free from crime and scandal and unwholesome things. It takes more pride in the quality of its circulation than in the mere quantity. It is not boastful nor too much given to finding fault. It wins the confidence of the people by its simplicity, honesty, purity, and progressiveness. It handles the news of to-day in a manner which appeals to the better class of people and to the better nature of all people. It emphasizes the hopeful features of the news. It has a permanent location for its special features. It is an authority on whatever it undertakes to exploit. It has a reputation for correctness. It regulates its advertising pages by reasonable requirements regarding display and illustrations, so that the page represents a pleasing whole.

Measurements of Excellence

The frequent attempts to pick out the best newspaper in the country, or in some one state, or in the high schools of a state or group of states bespeaks the universal interest in the ideal. The standards applied in making such judgments are enlightening. Points for consideration, recommended by H. F. Harrington, director of the Medil School of Journalism, are: (1) public service, (2) news, (3) editorials, (4) editorial paragraphs, (5) feature stories and human interest yarns, (6) typographical display, (7) use of art, (8) ethics, (9) criticism, (10) personals, (11) merchandising and advertising. Jason Rogers suggests the following: (1) general appearance first page, (2) general make-up of the entire paper, (3) editorial freedom, independence and sanity, (4) news merit, (5) loyalty, (6) human interest, (7) information departments, (8) constructive initiation, (9) household grip, (10) children's departments, (11) business and financial interest, (12) policy toward advertisers, (13) service to advertisers, (14) promotional advertising, (15) willingness honestly to coöperate with other newspapers.

In reading the less recent expressions on the subject, for example the article by Noah Brooks in the *Forum* for July, 1890, entitled "The Newspaper of the Future," one is liable to become a trifle discouraged at the delay in the arrival of the perfect newspaper expected so optimistically a generation ago. But patience has always been accounted a special virtue in those awaiting better things, remembering always that a companion virtue to patience is labor for the desired end. Whether or not it is true that "to travel hopefully is better than to arrive," it is certain that we should travel hopefully.

If the present writer's ideals for journalism have, as he hopes, emerged in this book, it would be superfluous to state them formally here; if they have not, it would be futile for him to attempt it. One thing is certain: the practice of journalism, however accurately pictured in these pages, as it is to-day, is bound to advance quickly beyond that description, rendering much of the foregoing discussion obsolete. The sooner the better.

APPENDIX

SOME CODES OF ETHICS FOR JOURNALISM

Broader in its significance than any of its several predecessors—codes by state editorial associations and by individual papers—is the code adopted April 28, 1923, by the National Association of Newspaper Editors, and since indorsed by a number of state associations and other groups.

The code was presented to the association by its committee on ethical standards of which H. J. Wright, editor of the *New York Globe*, was chairman. The association at that time had in its membership editors and managing editors of three-fourths of the daily newspapers in cities of the United States of more than 100,000 inhabitants.

Because of its intrinsic excellence and the endorsement it has received, it seems to take precedence over other codes.

CANONS OF JOURNALISM

The primary function of newspapers is to communicate to the human race what its members do, feel, and think. Journalism, therefore, demands of its practitioners the widest range of intelligence, of knowledge, and of experience, as well as natural and trained powers of observation and reasoning. To its opportunities as a chronicle are indissolubly linked its obligations as teacher and interpreter.

To the end of finding some means of codifying sound practice and just aspirations of American journalism these canons are set forth:

I. Responsibility

The right of a newspaper to attract and hold readers is restricted by nothing but considerations of public welfare. The use a newspaper makes of the share of public attention it gains serves to determine its sense of responsibility, which it shares with every member of its staff. A journalist who uses his power for any selfish or otherwise unworthy purpose is faithless to a high trust.

II. Freedom of the Press

Freedom of the press is to be guarded as a vital right of mankind. It is the unquestionable right to discuss whatever is not explicitly forbidden by law, including the wisdom of any restrictive statute.

III. Independence

Freedom from all obligations except that of fidelity to the public interest is vital.

1. Promotion of any private interest contrary to the general welfare, for whatever reason, is not compatible with honest journalism. So-called news communications from private sources should not be published without public notice of their source or else substantiation of their claims to value as news, both in form and substance.

2. Partisanship in editorial comment which knowingly departs from the truth, does violence to the best spirit of American journalism; in the news columns it is subversive of a fundamental principle of the profession.

IV. Sincerity, Truthfulness, Accuracy

Good faith with the reader is the foundation of all journalism worthy of the name.

1. By every consideration of good faith a newspaper is constrained to be truthful. It is not to be excused for lack of thoroughness or accuracy within its control or failure to obtain command of these essential qualities.

2. Headlines should be fully warranted by the contents of the articles which they surmount.

V. Impartiality

Sound practice makes clear distinction between news reports and expressions of opinion. News reports should be free from opinion or bias of any kind.

This rule does not apply to so-called special articles unmistakably devoted to advocacy or characterized by a signature authorizing the writer's own conclusions and interpretations.

VI. Fair Play

A newspaper should not publish unofficial charges affecting reputation or moral character without opportunity given to the accused to be heard; right practice demands the giving of such opportunity in all cases of serious accusation outside judicial proceedings.

1. A newspaper should not invade private rights or feelings without sure warrant of public right as distinguished from public curiosity.

2. It is the privilege, as it is the duty, of a newspaper to make prompt and complete correction of its own serious mistakes of fact or opinion, whatever their origin.

VII. Decency

A newspaper cannot escape conviction of insincerity if while professing high moral purpose it supplies incentives to base conduct, such as are to be found in details of crime and vice, publication of which is not demonstrably for the general good. Lacking authority to enforce its canons, the journalism here represented can but express the hope that deliberate pandering to vicious instincts will encounter effective public disapproval or yield to the influence of a preponderant professional condemnation.

The Kansas Code

The Kansas Editorial Association was probably the first state organization to adopt a code of ethics. It was written by W. E. Miller, editor of the *St. Mary's Star*, and was adopted by the association at its annual meeting, March 8, 1910.

For the Publisher

In Advertising

Definition.—Advertising is news, or views, of a business or professional enterprise which leads directly to its profits or increased business.

News of the industrial or commercial development of an institution which in no way has a specific bearing upon the merits of its products is not advertising.

Besides news which leads to a profit, advertising also includes communications and reports, cards of thanks, etc., over the space of which the editor has no control. Charges for the latter become more in the nature of a penalty to restrict their publication.

Responsibility.—The authorship of an advertisement should be so plainly stated in the context or at the end that it could not avoid catching the attention of the reader before he has left the matter.

Unsigned advertisements in the news columns should either be preceded or followed by the word "advertisement" or its abbreviation,

Freedom of Space.—We hold the right of the publisher to become a broker in land, loan, rental, and mercantile transactions through his want and advertising columns, and condemn any movement of those following such lines to restrict this right of the publisher to the free sale of his space for the purpose of bringing buyer and seller together.

This shall not be construed to warrant the publisher as such in handling the details, terms, etc., of the trade, but merely in safeguarding his freedom in selling his space to bring the buyer and seller together, leaving the bargaining to the principals.

Our advertising is to bring together the buyer and the seller, and we are not concerned whether it is paid for and ordered by the producer, the consumer, or a middleman.

Acceding to any other desires on the part of traders is knocking the foundations out from under the advertising business—the freedom of space. We hold that the freedom of space (where the payment is not a question) should only be restricted by the moral decency of the advertising matter.

We hold that the freedom of space denies us the right to sign any contract with a firm which contains any restrictions against the wording of the copy which we may receive from any other firm, even to the mentioning of the goods of the first firm by name.

Compensation.—We condemn the signing of contracts carrying with them the publication of any amount of free reading matter.

We condemn the acceptance of any exchange articles, trade checks, or courtesies in payment for advertising, holding that all advertising should be paid for in cash.

We condemn the giving of secret rebates upon the established advertising rate as published.

Rates.—All advertising rates should be on a unit per thousand basis and all advertisers are entitled to a full knowledge of the circulation, not only of the quantity but also of the distribution. Statements of circulation should show the number of bona fide subscribers, the number of exchanges, the number of complimentaries, and the number sold to newsdealers, and if possible the locality of distribution, in a general way.

Position.—Position contracts should be charged a fixed percentage above the established rate of the paper, and no contracts should be signed wherein a failure to give the position required results in a greater reduction from the established rate than the position premium is greater than the established rate.

Comparisons.—We consider it beneath the dignity of a publisher to place in his columns statements which make invidious

comparisons between the amount of advertising carried or the circulation of his paper and that of his competitor.

Press Agents and Unpaid Advertising.—The specific trade name of an article of commerce, or the name of a merchant, manufacturer, or professional man *with reference* to his wares, products, or labors should not be mentioned in a pure news story.

We condemn as against *moral decency* the publication of any advertisement which will obviously lead to any form of retrogression, such as private medical personals, indecent massage parlor advertisements, private matrimonial advertisements, physician's or hospital's advertisement for the care of private diseases, which carry in them any description or suggestive matter, of the same.

In Circulation

Definition.—Circulation is the entire list of first-hand readers of a publication and comprises the paid readers, complimentary readers, exchange readers, and advertising readers.

Compensation.—Subscriptions should be solicited and received only on a basis of cash consideration, the paper and its payment being the only elements to the transaction.

Newsdealers.—The purchase of a quantity of papers should be made outright, allowing for no return of unsold copies.

Gambling.—We condemn the practice of securing subscriptions through the sale or gift of chances.

Complimentaries.—Complimentary copies should not be sent to doctors, lawyers, ministers, postal clerks, police or court officials for news or mailing privileges.

In Estimating

Definition.—Estimating is the science of computing costs. Its conclusion is the price.

Basis.—We do not favor the establishment of a minimum rate card for advertising which would be uniform among publishers, but we do favor a more thorough understanding of the subject of costs, and commend to our members the labors of the American Printers' Cost Commission of the First International Cost Congress recently held in Chicago. Let us learn our costs and then each establish a rate card based upon our investment and the cost of production, having no consideration for the comparative ability of the advertisers to pay, or the semi-news nature of the advertisement.

Quantity Discount.—We consider it unwise to allow discounts greater than 10 per cent from the rate of first insertion for succeeding insertions.

News

Definition.—News is the impartial report of the activities of mind, men, and matter which do not offend the moral sensibilities of the more enlightened people.

Lies.—We condemn against truth:

(1) The publication of fake illustrations of men and events of news interest, however marked their similarity, without an accompanying statement that they are not real pictures of the event or person, but only suggestive imitations.

(2) The publication of fake interviews made up of the assumed views of an individual, without his consent.

(3) The publication of interviews in quotations unless the exact, approved language of the interviewed be used. When an interview is not an exact quotation it should be obvious in the reading that *only* the thought and impression of the interviewer is being reported.

(4) The issuance of fake news dispatches, whether the same have for their purpose the influencing of stock quotations, elections, or the sale of securities or merchandise. Some of the greatest advertising in the world has been stolen through the news columns in the form of dispatches from unscrupulous press agents. Millions have been made on the rise and fall of stock quotations caused by newspaper lies, sent out by designing reporters.

Injustice.—We condemn as against justice:

(1) The practice of reporters making detectives and spies of themselves in their endeavors to investigate the guilt or innocence of those under suspicion.

Reporters should not enter the domain of law in the apprehension of criminals. They should not become a detective or sweating agency for the purpose of furnishing excitement to the readers.

No suspect should have his hope of a just liberty foiled through the great prejudice which the public has formed against him because of the press verdict slyly couched in the news report, even before his arrest.

We should not even by insinuation interpret as facts our conclusions, unless by signature we become personally responsible for them. Exposition, explanation, and interpretation should be

left to the field of the expert or specialist with a full consciousness of his personal responsibility.

(2) The publication of the rumors and common gossips or the assumptions of a reporter relative to a suspect pending his arrest or the final culmination of his trial. A staff of reporters is not a detective agency, and the right of a suspect to a fair and impartial trial is often confounded by a reporter's practice of printing every ill-founded rumor of which he gets wind.

Indecencies.—Classification: For the sake of cleanness and order, crimes with which we will be concerned may be divided into those which offend against the *public trust* (such as bribery, defalcation, or embezzlement by a public official); those which offend against *private institutions* or *employers* (which are also often defalcations and betrayals of confidence), and crimes which offend against *private morality* most often centering around the *family relation*.

(1) In dealing with the suspicions against *public officials* or trustees we urge that *only facts* put in their *true relation* and records be used in the news reports.

No presumption or conclusion of the reporter should be allowed to enter, even though it has all the elements of a correct conclusion.

Conclusions and presumptions should be placed in interviews with the identity of their author easily apparent.

If an editor desires to draw a conclusion on the case, let him sign it. Do not hide behind the impersonality of the paper with your personal opinions.

(2) In dealing with the suspicions against agents of private institutions, facts alone, put in their true relation, should again be used.

But in this class of stories, suspicions and conclusions should be confined to those of the parties directly interested, and no statement of the party to the affair reflecting upon another should be published without at the same time publishing a statement of the accused relative thereto.

The comment of those not directly involved should not be published previous to the arrest or pending the trial.

(3) In dealing with the offenses against private morality, we should refuse to print any record of the matter, however true, until the warrant has been filed or the arrest made, and even then our report should contain only an epitome of the charges by the plaintiff and the answers by the defendant, preferably secured from their respective attorneys.

No society gossips or scandals, however true, should ever be published concerning such cases.

However prominent the principals, offenses against private morality should never receive *first-page position* and their details should be eliminated as much as possible.

Certain crimes against private morality which are revolting to our finer sensibilities should be ignored entirely; however, in the event of their having become public with harmful exaggerations, we may make an elementary statement, couched in the least suggestive language.

In no case should the reckless daring of the suspect be lionized.

(4) Except when the suspect has escaped, his picture should never be printed.

For the Editor

Views

Definition.—Views are the impressions, beliefs, or opinions which are published in a paper, whether from the editorial staffs of the same, outside contributors, or secured interviews.

A Distinction.—We hold that whenever a publication confines the bulk of its views to any particular line of thought, class of views, or side of a moot question, it becomes to that extent a class publication, and inasmuch ceases to be a newspaper.

An Explanation.—You will note by our definition of news that it is the impartial portrayal of the decent activities of mind, men, and matter. This definition applied to class publications would be changed by replacing the word *impartial* with the word *partial*.

In this section we will deal with *impartiality* in the presentation of the decent activities of the mind of the community—with the views or editorial policy of a paper.

Responsibility.—Whereas, a view or conclusion is the product of some mind or minds, and whereas the value and significance of a view is dependent upon the known merit of its author or authors, the reader is entitled and has the right to know the personal identity of the author, whether by the signature in a communication, the statement of the reporter in an interview, or the caption in a special article and *the paper as such* should in no wise become an advocate.

Influence (editorial).—We should avoid permitting large institutions or persons to own stock in or make loans to our publishing business if we have reasonable grounds to believe that their interests would be seriously affected by any other than a true presentation of all news and free willingness to present every possible point of view under signature or interview.

Influence (reportorial).—No reporter should be retained who accepts any courtesies, unusual favors, opportunities for self-gain, or side employment from any factors whose interests would be affected by the manner in which his reports are made.

Deception.—We should not allow the *presumed* knowledge on the part of the interviewed that we are newspaper men to permit us to quote them without their explicit permission, but where such knowledge is certain we insist upon our right to print the views unless directly forbidden.

Faith With Interviewed.—An interview or statement should not be displayed previous to its publication without the permission of the author.

Bounds of Publicity.—A man's name and portrait are his private property and the point where they cease to be private and become public should be defined for our association.

The Oregon Code of Ethics for Journalism

This code was written by Colin V. Dymont, an experienced journalist and a professor in the school of journalism at the University of Oregon. It was adopted by the Oregon State Editorial Association, January 14, 1922.

Preamble

We believe in the teaching of the great ethicists that a general state of happiness and well-being is attainable throughout the world; and that this state is the chief end-in-view of society.

We recognize an instinct in every good man that his utterances and his deeds should make a reasonable and continuous contribution toward this ultimate state, in the possibility of which we reiterate our belief, however remote it may now seem.

We believe that men collectively should also follow the principles of practice that guide the ethical individual. For whatever purpose men are associated, we believe they should endeavor to make the reasonable and continuous contribution that distinguishes the ethical man. And all the agencies and instrumentalities employed by men, singly or collectively, should be based upon the best ethical practice of the time, so that the end-in-view of society may thereby be hastened.

Of all these agencies the printed word is most widely diffused and most powerful. The printed word is the single instrument of the profession we represent, and the extent to which it is shaping the thoughts and the conduct of peoples is measureless. We therefore pronounce the ethical responsibility of journalism the

greatest of the professional responsibilities, and we desire to accept our responsibility, now and hereafter, to the utmost extent that is right and reasonable in our respective circumstances.

Accordingly we adopt for our guidance the following code, which shall be known as the Oregon Code of Ethics for Journalism.

I. Sincerity; Truth

The foundation of ethical journalism is sincerity. The sincere journalist will be honest alike in his purposes and in his writings. To the best of his capacity to ascertain truth, he will always be truthful. It is his attitude toward truth that distinguishes the ethical from the unethical writer. It is naturally not possible that all writing can be without error; but it can always be without deliberate error. There is no place in journalism for the dissembler; the distorter; the prevaricator; the suppressor; or the dishonest thinker.

The first section of this code therefore provides that we shall be continuously sincere in professional practice; and sincerity as journalists means, for example, that:

1. We will put accuracy above all other considerations in the written word, whether editorial, advertisement, article, or news story.

2. We will interpret accuracy not merely as the absence of actual misstatement, but as the presence of whatever is necessary to prevent the reader from making a false deduction.

3. In an ethical attitude toward truth, we will be open at all times to conviction, for the sincere journalist, while fearless and firm, will never be stubborn; therefore we will never decline to hear and consider new evidence.

4. If new evidence forces a change of opinion, we will be as free in the acknowledgment of the new opinion as in the utterance of the old.

5. We will promote a similar attitude in others toward truth, not asking or permitting employes to write things which as sincere journalists we would not ourselves write.

II. Care; Competency; Thoroughness

Inaccuracy in journalism is commonly due more to lack of mental equipment than to wilfulness of attitude. The ill-equipped man cannot be more competent as a journalist than he can as a doctor or engineer. Given an ethical attitude, the contribution that each journalist makes to his community and to society is nearly in ratio to his competency. We regard journalism as a precise and a

learned profession, and it is therefore the second part of this code that:

6. By study and inquiry and observation, we will constantly aim to improve ourselves, so that our writings may be more authentic, and of greater perspective, and more conducive to the social good.

7. We will consider it an essential in those we employ that they not merely be of ethical attitude, but reasonably equipped to carry out their ideals.

8. We will make care our devotion in the preparation of statements of fact and in the utterance of opinion.

9. We will advocate in our respective communities the same thoroughness, sound preparation, and pride of craft, that we desire in ourselves, our employes, and our associates.

10. We are accordingly the active enemies of superficiality and pretense.

III. Justice; Mercy; Kindliness

Liberty of the press is, by constitution, statute, and custom, greater in the United States than anywhere else in the world. This liberty exists for our press so that the liberty of the whole people may thereby be guarded. It so happens that at times the liberty of the press is exercised as license to infringe upon the rights of groups and of individuals: because custom and law have brought about certain immunities, it happens that in haste or zeal or malice or indifference, persons are unjustly dealt by. Yet the freedom of the press should at all times be exercised as the makers of the constitution, and the people themselves through their tolerance, have intended it. The reputations of men and women are sacred in nature and not to be torn down lightly. We therefore pronounce it appropriate to include in this code that:

11. We will not make "privileged utterance" a cloak for unjust attack, or spiteful venting, or carelessness in investigation, in the cases of parties or persons.

12. We will aim to protect, within reason, the rights of individuals mentioned in public documents, regardless of the effect on "good stories" or upon editorial policy.

13. We will deal by all persons alike so far as is humanly possible, not varying from the procedure of any part of this code because of the wealth, influence, or personal situation of the persons concerned, except as hereinafter provided.

14. It shall be one of our canons that mercy and kindliness are legitimate considerations in any phase of journalism; and that if the public or social interest seems to be best conserved by suppression, we may suppress; but the motive in such instances

must always be the public or social interest, and not the personal or commercial interest.

15. We will try so to conduct our publication, or to direct our writing, that justice, kindliness, and mercy will characterize our work.

IV. Moderation; Conservatism; Proportion

Since the public takes from the journalist so great a proportion of the evidence upon which it forms its opinions, obviously that evidence should be of high type. The writer who makes his appeal to the passions rather than to the intellect is too often invalid as a purveyor of evidence because his facts are out of perspective. By improper emphasis, by skilful arrangement, or by devices of typography or rhetoric, he causes the formation in the reader's mind of unsound opinion. This practice is quite as improper as and frequently is more harmful than actual prevarication. Through this code we desire to take a position against so-called sensational practice by acceptance of the following canons:

16. We will endeavor to avoid the injustice that springs from hasty conclusion in editorial or reportorial or interpretative practice.

17. We will not overplay news or editorial for the sake of effect when such procedure may lead to false deductions in readers' minds.

18. We will regard accuracy and completeness as more vital than our being the first to print.

19. We will try to observe due proportion in the display of news to the end that inconsequential matter may not seem to take precedence in social importance over news of public significance.

20. We will in all respects in our writing and publishing endeavor to observe moderation and steadiness.

21. Recognizing that the kaleidoscopic changes in news tend to keep the public processes of mind at a superficial level, we will try to maintain a news and an editorial policy that will be less ephemeral in its influence upon social thought.

V. Partisanship; Propaganda

We believe that the public has confidence in the printed word of journalism in proportion as it is able to believe in the competency of journalists and have trust in their motives. Lack of trust in our motives may arise from the suspicion that we shape our writings to suit non-social interests, or that we open our columns to propaganda, or both. Accordingly we adopt the following professional canons:

22. We will resist outside control in every phase of our practice,

believing that the best interests of society require intellectual freedom in journalism.

23. We will rise above party and other partisanship in writing and publishing, supporting parties and issues only so far as we sincerely believe them to be in the public interest.

24. We will not permit, unless in exceptional cases, the publishing of news and editorial matter not prepared by ourselves or our staffs, believing that original matter is the best answer to the peril of propaganda.

VI. Public Service and Social Policy

We dispute the maxim sometimes heard that a newspaper should follow its constituency in public morals and policy rather than try to lead it. We do not expect to be so far ahead of our time that our policies will be impractical; but we do desire to be abreast of the best thought of the time, and if possible to be its guide. It is not true that a newspaper should be only as advanced in its ethical atmosphere as it conceives the average of its readers to be. No man who is not in ethical advance of the average of his community should be in the profession of journalism. We declare therefore as follows:

25. We will keep our writings and our publications free from unrefinement, except so far as we may sincerely believe publication of sordid details to be for the social good.

26. We will consider all that we write or publish for public consumption in the light of its effect upon social policy, refraining from writing or from publishing if we believe our material to be socially detrimental.

27. We will regard our privilege of writing for publication or publishing for public consumption as an enterprise that is social as well as commercial in character, and therefore will at all times have an eye against doing anything counter to social interest.

28. We believe it an essential part of this policy that we shall not be respecters of persons.

VII. Advertising and Circulation

We repudiate the principle of "letting the buyer beware." We cannot agree to guarantee advertising, but we assume a definite attitude toward the advertising that we write, solicit, or print. We believe that the same canons of truth and justice should apply in advertising and circulation as we are adopting for news and editorial matter. We therefore agree to the following business principles:

29. We will cooperate with those social interests whose business it is to raise the ethical standard of advertising.

30. We will discourage and bar from our columns advertising which in our belief is intended to deceive the reader in his estimate of what is advertised. (This clause is intended to cover the many phases of fraud, and unfair competition, and the advertising of articles that seem likely to be harmful to the purchaser's morals or health.)

31. We will not advertise our own newspaper or its circulation boastfully, or otherwise, in terms not in harmony with the clauses of this code of ethics. (This is intended to cover misleading statements to the public or to advertisers as to the whole number of copies printed, number of paid-up subscribers, number of street sales, and percentage of local circulation.)

32. We will not make our printing facilities available for the production of advertising which we believe to be socially harmful or fraudulent in its intent.

To the foregoing code we subscribe heartily as a part of our duty to society and of our belief that the salvation of the world can come only through the acceptance and practice by the people of the world of a sound and practical ethical philosophy.

The Missouri Code

At its annual meeting in 1921, the Missouri State Press Association adopted a code presented by William Southern, Jr., editor of the *Examiner* of Independence.

Preamble

In America, where the stability of the government rests upon the approval of the people, it is essential that newspapers, the medium through which the people draw their information, be developed to a high point of efficiency, stability, impartiality and integrity. The future of the republic depends on the maintenance of a high standard among journalists. Such a standard can not be maintained unless the motives and conduct of the members of our profession are such as merit approval and confidence.

The profession of journalism is entitled to stand side by side with the other learned professions and is, far more than any other, interwoven with the lines of public service. The journalist can not consider his profession rightly unless he recognizes his obligation to the public. A newspaper does not belong solely to its owner and is not fulfilling its highest functions if devoted selfishly. Therefore, the Missouri Press Association presents the following principles as a general guide, not a set form of rules, for the practice of journalism:

Editorial

We declare as a fundamental principle that Truth is the basis of all correct journalism. To go beyond the truth, either in headline or text, is subversive of good journalism. To suppress the truth, when it properly belongs to the public, is a betrayal of public faith.

Editorial comment should always be fair and just and not controlled by business or political experiences. Nothing should be printed editorially which the writer will not readily acknowledge as his own in public.

Control of news or comment for business considerations is not worthy of a newspaper. The news should be covered, written and interpreted wholly and at all times in the interest of the public. Advertisers have no claims on newspaper favor except in their capacity as readers and as members of the community.

No person who controls the policy of a newspaper should at the same time hold office or have affiliations, the duties of which conflict with the public service that his newspaper should render.

Advertising

It is not good ethics nor good business to accept advertisements that are dishonest, deceptive or misleading. Concerns or individuals who want to use our columns to sell questionable stocks or anything else which promises great returns for small investment should always be investigated. Our leaders should be protected from advertising sharks. Rates should be fixed at a figure which will yield a profit and never cut. The reader deserves a square deal and the advertiser the same kind of treatment.

Advertising disguised as news or editorial should not be accepted. Political advertising especially should show at a glance that it is advertising. It is just as bad to be bribed by the promise of political patronage as to be bribed by political cash.

To tear down a competitor in order to build up oneself is not good business, nor is it ethical. Newspaper controversies should never enter newspaper columns. Good business demands the same treatment to a competitor that one would like for a competitor to give to himself. Create new business rather than try to take away that of another.

Advertising should never be demanded from a customer simply because he has given it to another paper. Merit, product and service should be the standard.

Subscription

The claiming of more subscribers than are actually on the paid list in order to secure larger advertising prices is obtaining money

under false pretenses. The advertiser is entitled to know just what he is getting for his money, just what the newspaper is selling to him. Subscription lists made up at nominal prices or secured by means of premiums or contests are to be strictly avoided.

Summary

In every line of journalistic endeavor we recognize and proclaim our obligation to the public, our duty to regard always the truth, to deal justly and walk humbly before the gospel of unselfish service.

Texas Press Association Code of Ethics

The following expression of ideals by the Editors of Texas was adopted in 1921. It is also the code adopted by the South Florida Press Association.

We believe in journalism as an honorable profession, and recognizing the opportunities for service to the commonwealth we do hereby establish the following code of rules and ethics for government of professional practice as obligatory on every member of this association.

To give due credit for all matter copied from other publications;

To investigate all questionable advertising offered, and refuse space to misleading, dishonest or illegitimate advertisements;

To use every endeavor to elevate the standards of Journalism, and to so conduct our own papers that competitors may find it wise, profitable and conducive to happiness to emulate our example;

To strive for no success that is not founded upon the highest conception of justice and morality;

Not to publish or claim circulation in excess of actual figures;

Not to cut prices below published rates;

Not to speak disparagingly through editorial or news columns of competing papers or editors;

Not to attempt to engage help employed by a competitor without first informing the competitor and giving him an opportunity, if he so desires, to retain that employee;

To discourage the growing evil of the space grafter by every legitimate means;

To resolve to perform every duty incumbent upon us as members of this association, and to accept no office or duty unless with the full determination to do our best to fulfill the requirements imposed;

In dealing with our fellow members and competitors to endeavor to put into practice so far as humanly possible, the precepts of the Golden Rule, thereby cementing the ties of fraternal relationship that should exist between members of this body.

The South Dakota Code

The following code of ethics was adopted by the South Dakota Press Association at a meeting, February 17, 1922.

We of the profession of journalism, especially of that department which has to do with the publication of newspapers, deem it fitting that a code of ethics be set down to embody those ideals of service and that sense of propriety and honor which should imbue the motives and guide the actions of all who enter upon this profession.

This code of ethics is founded upon the basic principles of truth and justice. It is to be kept as nearly inviolate as is possible in the alignment of human aspirations with the golden rule of conduct, "whatsoever ye would that men do unto you, do ye so unto them."

Service

The profession of journalism occupies the place of an essential service in its relations to the public. Its implied contract with the reader invites trust and accepts the responsibility of dependence. To merit this mutuality of interests the newspaper owes and must give adherence to high standards and these recognized ideals of motive, heart and conduct.

Truth and Honesty

The foundation stone of the profession of journalism is truth. Unwavering adherence to "whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest," must be the constant aim of men and women who publish newspapers.

News should be uncolored report of all the vital facts accurately stated, insofar as possible to arrive at them.

Editorials should be sincere discussion based upon true statements in the premises from which honest arguments may be developed by orderly deduction.

Advertising should be decent and honest in its selling intent and free from misleading or untrue statement.

Fairness and Accuracy

The profession of journalism must be fair in all its dealings with the public. Society exists and our laws are made under a government deriving its powers from the people and depending upon their approval for its stability and continued existence.

To the end that this continue to be justly so, it is of first importance that the whole people be kept fully and fairly informed.

The printed word is the most widespread and useful medium of

contact with the human mind and the newspaper the most powerful agency for broadcasting information. Upon those who practice this profession rests the sacred duty of keeping these mighty means of communication with mankind pure at the source, undefiled of intent and free of bias.

The profession of journalism is the greatest factor in influencing human judgment. It is of first importance therefore, that judgments be formed after a fair presentation of all facts accurately stated. This accuracy is not only to be an absence of misstatement but the orderly presence of all the pertinent truths.

In accuracy partisanship or the taint of propaganda has no part and cannot be present in fair journalism.

Sincerity and Decency

Sincerity of purpose as well as of writings characterizes the ethical journalist. Honest convictions inspire his written words. Back of them is the sincerity of desire that actuates all high intent.

With full realization of this the members of the South Dakota Press Association accept our responsibility in truthfully reporting, in directing the thoughts and shaping the conduct of society. In all sincerity and to the utmost extent that is right and reasonable in our respective communities, we pledge our efforts to this end.

Guaranteed the freedom of its press, the profession of journalism recognizes that liberty is not license. It, therefore, reserves to itself the right of decision in what shall be printed and what shall be omitted.

This is done to safeguard our publications from unrefinement, to protect within reason the rights and reputations of individuals and to free our papers from sordidness, except as we sincerely believe publication to be for the good of society.

We deem suppression to be a righteous function of ethical journalism to enforce omission of undue matter based upon an honorable intent to serve public good and not selfish purpose.

Advertising which is indecent in word or motive, the aim of which is to defraud, or which serves no useful purpose, has no part in the publications of the sincere member of the profession.

Honor

The honor of the profession is above the publication of an untruth upon an unworthy motive or upon a biased discussion based upon the false premise of a half truth entered upon for personal gain or party advancement.

The honor of the profession should be dear to all in a realization that individual character and conduct reflects good or ill upon the

profession. If, then, private honor never be smirched by private act or omission, the honor of the profession remains unsullied.

Recompense and Respect

As the servant is worthy of his hire, journalism is entitled to fair recompense in proportion as it serves. This must be evidenced by a demand which should be sufficient to establish all useful publications upon a sound business basis.

This is a prime essential because it is a fact that the publication successful through honest endeavor and free of entanglements of financial obligation and political debt has broader scope toward service, freer acceptance of its opinions and a larger opportunity for usefulness. Success in service is the end sought for and only to be rightfully obtained through integrity, industry and a clear vision of the function of the true journalist.

As the profession of journalism demands of its members that they be honest, fair and just to all, they in return shall demand fair treatment, justice and respect from those with whom they deal.

The Washington Code of Ethics

Approved by the Washington State Press Association, 1923:

I Will Be
 Truthful in News
 Truthful in Editorials
 Truthful in Advertising
 True to All My Obligations
 Honest with My Competitors
 True to the Ideals of Journalism
 Mindful of the Value of Sincerity
 Faithful to Community, State, Nation
 Firm in Publication of Clean News
 Honorable in all of My Dealings
 Thorough in all of My Studies
 Unselfish in all My Services
 Faithful to all My Friends
 Fair to all My Critics

The same association also established the following code of rules for government of practice by members of the association:

To give due credit for all matter copied from other papers or magazines.

Not to speak disparagingly through editorials or news columns of competing papers or editors.

Not to engage help employed by a competitor without first informing the competitor and giving him an opportunity, if he wishes, to retain his employee.

Not to cut prices below published rates.

To investigate all questionable advertising and refuse space to misleading and illegitimate advertisements.

Not to publish or claim circulation in excess of actual figures.

To strive for no circulation or success that is not founded on the highest justice and morality.

To use every endeavor to elevate the standards of journalism and to so conduct our papers that competitors may find it wise, profitable and conducive to happiness to emulate our example.

Following are some of the individual newspaper codes:

Editorial Ethics of the Philadelphia *Public Ledger*

Always deal fairly and frankly with the public.

A newspaper to be trusted and respected must give trustworthy information and counsel. It is a serious thing to mislead the people.

Understate your case rather than overstate it.

Have a sure voucher for every statement, especially for censure.

There is a wide gap between accusation of crime and actual guilt.

Deal gently with weak and helpless offenders.

Before making up judgment take care to understand both sides, and remember there are at least two sides. If you attempt to decide, you are bound to know both.

Do not say you know when you have only heard.

Never proceed on mere hearsay. Rumor is only an index to be followed by inquiry.

Take care to be right. Better be right than quickest with "the news" which is often false. It is bad to be late, but worse to be wrong.

Go to first hands and original sources for information; if you cannot, then get as near as you can.

It is the reporter's office to chronicle events, to collect facts; comments on the facts are reserved for the editor.

Let the facts and reasoning tell the story rather than rhetorical flourish.

Don't be too positive. Remember always it is possible you may err.

All persons have equal rights in the court of conscience, as well as in courts of law.

Never add fuel to the fire of popular excitement.

There is nothing more demoralizing in public affairs than habitual disregard of law.

Uphold the authorities in maintaining public order, rectify wrongs

through the law. If the law is defective, better mend it than break it.

Nearly always there is law enough. It is the failure to enforce it that makes most mischief.

There is no need, and therefore no excuse, for mob law in American communities.

Numerous as bad men may be, remember they are but few compared with the millions of the people.

The public welfare has higher claims than any party cry.

Grace and purity of style are always desirable, but never allow rhetoric to displace clear, direct, forcible expression.

Plain words are essential for unlearned people, and these are just as plain to the most accomplished.

The Brooklyn *Eagle's* Policies

1. The Brooklyn *Eagle* is primarily a home newspaper. It prints all the news, but aims to emphasize what is helpful rather than harmful. It believes in enterprise, but not in sensationalism. As a three-cent newspaper it must uphold the highest standards of newspaper making. In particular it must always be truthful, accurate and fair.

2. "Brooklyn First" is a cardinal principle of *Eagle* policy. This newspaper is a Brooklyn institution. It is also a public service institution. Whatever helps Brooklyn helps the *Eagle*. The more you know about Brooklyn and about the *Eagle* the better you will serve both.

3. The *Eagle* ranks as one of the world's greatest newspapers. The world is its province and its interest extends to the activities of human-kind everywhere. It is through being liberal and cosmopolitan that you can best contribute your share to preserving the *Eagle's* reputation as a broadly representative newspaper.

General Rules

The cardinal principle of good newspaper work is accuracy. The *Eagle* demands it and will insist on getting it. Verify your facts. Don't depend on some one's say-so, but go to the reference books.

Get names right. Nothing does a newspaper more harm than misspelled names. A list of names frequently used in the *Eagle* is included in this book. Supplement this with a list of your own. Carelessness in this connection always bars promotion and has led to dismissal.

Be fair. The *Eagle* wants to make friends, not enemies. Don't suppress any part of the truth for fear of spoiling a good story.

Get both sides. Don't let any one use the *Eagle* to vent a grudge. Give the man or institution under attack a chance to make out a case.

When a person is charged with crime or has done something immoral or discreditable do not intrude the names of prominent relatives who are in no way involved. In writing obituaries do not emphasize unfortunate incidents in the lives of well-reputed persons.

Beware of the seekers after free publicity. Remember that space in the *Eagle* is worth twenty-five cents a line. What you give away the *Eagle* cannot sell. Don't help press agents cheat the advertising department.

Always hesitate to write anything that will offend the members of a race or sect. You may offend 20,000 *Eagle* readers with a single word. Do not mention the nationality or religious belief of a person under arrest unless that is an essential and inevitable feature of the story. Don't emphasize locality in fire or burglary stories or in news reports which give a special section an unsavory reputation.

Read the *Eagle* from the first page to the last. Only in that way can you become familiar with its style, its policy, and its special hobbies. If you discover errors, report them; if you have suggestions, make them. Read the other local papers and note how they handled your story. If you notice any important difference of fact, length or emphasis, call it to the city editor's attention. To be known as a "live wire" is to be in line for promotion.

Beware of your own prejudices. Your personal likes or dislikes have no place in a news story. If you feel strongly on some subject try your hand at an editorial or write a letter for the Forum page. But keep your news reports free from editorial comment.

Never promise to suppress a news story. News which you secure as an *Eagle* employee is the *Eagle's* property, and your superiors are the final judges of what shall or shall not be used. Requests for suppression or omission must always be carefully reported and reasons given, but your answer to the request must be nothing more than the promise that you will transmit it.

Always accept news items or suggestions from outsiders gratefully. Some may be worthless, but an attitude of encouragement ultimately wins help that will prove invaluable to you and to the *Eagle*.

The *Christian Science Monitor's* Code

1. Good English. A feature of the *Monitor* is the wide field covered in its news service and the various departments; therefore space in its columns is valuable—each word should be to the point and tell its own story.

2. Terse, crisp writing is not necessarily devoid of the picturesque, and is far more forceful. In three words, "boil it down."

3. Aim at simplicity; express your thoughts so clearly that "he that runs may read." Faulty construction; long, involved sentences, in which the original subject and predicate are hopelessly entangled in a labyrinth of modifying phrases and clauses, and the pronouns have become of doubtful lineage—all these are faults to be avoided. Use words of one syllable rather than those of many—the latter may serve to show off your learning, but the average reader hasn't a dictionary at his elbow or the time to use it.

4. You are writing for an English-reading public, of whom only a minority are college-bred men and women—don't lose sight of the majority. It often happens that the exact shade of meaning—it may be the pith of your "story"—can be conveyed only in the original tongue—use it then, by all means; but as a rule only such foreign words and expressions as by long and familiar usage have become a part of the English language have any place in the columns of a daily paper.

5. Nauseating words. Never use expressions that suggest nauseating ideas; as "burned to a crisp," "gutted."

6. Avoid such tautological expressions as "marriage nuptials," "funeral obsequies," "suffocated to death," etc.

7. Slang. Slang is undoubtedly a large element in colloquial language, yet it must be excluded from the columns of the *Christian Science Monitor*. Even in interviews it must not be used unless sanctioned by the EDITOR-IN-CHIEF. When the paper speaks for itself the use of slang is prohibited. This caution is given the second time that all may mark its imperative nature.

8. News, not opinions. The news columns are for news; not for opinions except as these are reported as news. Attempts on the part of the reporters or correspondents to usurp the editor's functions and pass judgment upon the merits of propositions should be suppressed, no matter how big a hole the omission makes in a story.

9. Beware of imputations of wrong-doing in connection with mysterious disappearances. Comment is not justifiable unless public interests are involved, and then good authority should be had for any statement made.

10. Reports of failures or anything affecting commercial credit should never be used upon hearsay.

11. Accuracy. Editors and reporters in preparing their "copy" must write PROPER NAMES so plainly that they NEED NOT BE mistaken, and also when possible should use printed matter in the casts of plays and programs. One of the primal points in satisfactory performance of duty for the *Christian Science Monitor* is

accuracy. This is made possible in the various departments by competent work in the editorial and reportorial branches. Write out in full both the first and last names of persons; initial for middle name.

12. Verify all quotations, especially from the Bible, whenever time will permit.

13. Heads. Indicate style of head by number. Make careful count, so that the head as written may fit the style. Head-lines must be an index to the story, not a characterization of it; descriptive, not opinionated; concrete, not abstract; and alliteration, clap-trap, and sensationalism are PROHIBITED. General readings such as "Held for Court," "Sent to Jail," "Sued for Damages," will not be tolerated. Avoid such headings as "Killed Her Own Children," "Frantic Mother's Horrible Death"; "Lake Steamer Lost in Storm," "Wild Waves Gather a Harvest of Death."

14. Above all. Remember that you are preparing copy for a Christian Science publication whose standard is Truth and whose policy is absolutely devoid of sensationalism.

The Springfield *Republican's* Rules

Interviewing

Never put within quotation marks in your copy what people say to you in an interview without,

First: An understanding with them that they are to be quoted.

Second: Letting them know just what words you attribute to them.

This is the only safe rule to follow when the subject is at all controversial or involves private or personal interests.

When people are quoted, the paper is placed in the position of assuring its readers that the quoted passages were literally spoken; consequently, inaccuracy in quotation is unpardonable.

Direct quotation in an interview, unless permission is given to use that form, can be avoided ordinarily by using indirect discourse. For instance, you may write; Mr. Smith, in discussing the subject, said in effect that . . . etc.

Reports of public addresses should never be put within quotation marks unless the exact language of the speaker is reproduced.

Before interviewing a person, decide on a series of questions on the subject about which you wish to inquire. If the person interviewed talks willingly, follow him through. If he does not, stick to your original questions. If the assignment presents difficulties, before you attempt to consult the city editor about the best method to pursue. Try to familiarize yourself as much as possible with the subject about which you are to talk with him.

Obituaries

Be very careful about writing obituaries. Make every possible effort to get the facts and write them accurately. Omit reference to aspects of the dead person's life, unless the circumstances are exceptional, which would pain or aggrieve the surviving relatives and friends. Good will may be cultivated for the paper by writing appreciatively regarding the dead person's good qualities and achievements.

Miscellaneous Instructions

Read over your article so as to be sure that the reader will get the picture you have in mind.

Do not depend on the editor to correct your mistakes; correct them yourself.

Never try to write a humorous article on the suffering or death of an animal; nor, in the case of human beings, where the incident involves disgrace, humiliation, or sorrow to them, their relatives, or friends.

Carefully estimate every piece of news you get. There is ample space for important news. Unimportant news should be disposed of as briefly as possible.

Wrong things will from time to time be done and wrong conditions will develop in this as in every other community. It is the function of an honest newspaper to print the news without fear or favor. Publicity brings correction. But no report should be written that can be interpreted as revealing a petty malice on the part of the reporter or the paper in attributing wrongful acts to any person. The *Republican* has been published in Springfield for nearly 100 years; it believes, with pride, that the standards of the community are high and that it has contributed to their maintenance by a fearless news policy. The *Republican*, however, is not out to "get" anybody in order to gratify animosities. The paper wants friends, not enemies.

Standards of The Detroit News

The paper should be:

Vigorous, but not vicious.

Interesting, but not sensational.

Fearless, but fair.

Accurate as far as human effort can obtain accuracy.

Striving ever to gain and impart information.

As bright as possible, but never sacrificing solid information for brilliancy.

Looking for the uplifting rather than the depraved things of life.

We should work to have the word *reliable* stamped all over every page of the paper.

The place to commence this is with the staff members: first getting men and women of character to do the writing and editing, and then training them in our way of thinking and handling news and other reading matter.

Nothing here is intended as a reflection on the present staff or the paper we have been getting out; we have a good staff and a good paper; the aim is to improve both as much as possible.

If you make an error, you have two duties to perform: one to the person misrepresented and one to your reading public. Never leave the reader of the *News* misinformed on any subject. If you wrongfully infer that a man has done something that he did not do, or has said something that he did not say, you do him an injustice—that's one. But you also do thousands of readers an injustice, leaving them misinformed as to the character of the man dealt with. Corrections should never be given grudgingly. Always make them cheerfully, fully, and in larger type than the error, if any difference.

If a reporter gets drunk, the people do not say, "There goes So-and-So," calling him by name; they say, "There goes a *News* reporter." That reflects on the entire staff; that robs the paper of a certain amount of its standing, of a certain amount of its reputation for reliability. No one has confidence in the work of a drunken man. Any one on the editorial staff who gets drunk once or who wilfully prints a misstatement of any kind should not be retained on the staff a minute.

The American people want to *know*, to learn, to get information. To quote a writer: "Your opinion is worth no more than your information." Give them your information and let them draw their own conclusions. Comment should be more along the line of enlightenment by well-marshalled facts, and by telling the readers what relation an act to-day has to an act of yesterday. Let them come to their own conclusions as far as possible.

No issue is worth advocating that is not strong enough to withstand all the facts that the opposition to it can throw against it. Our readers should be well informed on both sides of *every* issue.

Kindly, helpful suggestions will often direct officials in the right, where nagging will make them stay stubbornly on the wrong side. That does not mean that there should be any lack of diligence in watching for, and opposition to, intentional crooks.

A staff can only be good and strong by having every part of it strong. The moment it becomes evident that a man, either by force of circumstance or because of his own character, does not fit into our organization, you do him a kindness and do justice to the paper by letting him know, so he can go to a calling in which

he can succeed, and he will not be in the way of filling the place with a competent man.

Make the paper good all the way through, so there will not be disappointment on the part of a reporter, if his story is not found on the first page, but so he will feel it must have merit to get into the paper at all. Avoid making it a "front-page paper."

Stories should be brief, but not meager. Tell the story, all of it, in as few words as possible.

Nature makes facts more interesting than any reporter can imagine them. There is an interesting feature in every story, if you will dig it out. If you don't get it, it is because you don't dig deep enough.

The most valuable asset of any paper is its reputation for telling the truth; the only way to have that reputation is to tell the truth. Untruth, due to carelessness, or excessive imagination, injures the paper as much as though intentional.

Every one with a complaint should be given a respectful and kindly hearing; especial consideration should be given the poor and lowly, who may be less able to present their claims than those more favored in life. A man of prominence and education knows how to get into the office and present his complaint. A washer-woman may come to the door, timidly, haltingly, scarcely knowing what to do, and all the while her complaint may be as just as that of the other complainant, perhaps more so. She should be received kindly and helped to present what she has to say.

Simple, plain language is strongest and best. A man of meager education can understand it, while the man of higher education, usually reading a paper in the evening after a day's work, will read it with relish. There is never any need of using big words to show off one's learning. The object of a story or an editorial is to inform or convince; but it is hard to do either if the reader has to study over a big word or an involved sentence. Stick to plain English all the time. A few readers may understand and appreciate a Latin or French quotation, or one from some other foreign language, but the big mass of our readers are the plain people and such a quotation would be lost on the majority.

Be fair. Don't let the libel laws be your measure as to the printing of a story, but let fairness be your measure. If you are fair, you need not worry any about libel laws.

Always give the other fellow a hearing. He may be in the wrong, but even that may be a matter of degree. It wouldn't be fair to picture him as all black when there may be mitigating circumstances.

It is not necessary to tell the people that we are honest, or bright, or alert, or that a story appeared exclusively in our paper. If true,

the public will find it out. An honest man does not have to advertise his honesty eternally.

Time heals all things but a woman's damaged reputation. Be careful and cautious and fair and decent in dealing with any man's reputation, but be doubly so—and then some—when a woman's name is at stake. Do not by direct statement, jest, or careless reference, raise a question mark after any woman's name if it can be avoided—and it usually can be. Even if a woman slips, be generous; it may be a crisis in her life. Printing the story may drive her to despair; kindly treatment may leave her with hope. No story is worth ruining a woman's life—or man's either.

Keep the paper clean in language and thought. Profane or suggestive words are not necessary. When in doubt, think of a 13-year-old girl reading what you are writing.

Do not look on newspaper work as a "game," of pitilessly printing that on which you are only half-informed, for the mere sake of beating some other paper, but take it rather as a serious, constructive work in which you are to use all the energy and diligence needed to get all the worth-while information for your readers at the earliest possible moment at which you can do so and have it reliable.

Nothing should ever be taken from another publication without giving full credit. Merely crediting a piece of writing to "Exchange" is not fair.

Elections coming on Tuesday, no candidate or party should be permitted to print new charges or statements later than the Friday before election. No paper should print anything about anybody without allowing ample time for an answer.

This is not intended as a set of rules. Rules kill individuality, and nothing is so valuable on a newspaper staff as good, strong individuality. This is intended as an expression of what the *News* and the *News Tribune* should be, leaving it to each to enter into the spirit of the work, shaping his mental attitude so as to help bring about the results desired.

Instructions to The Hearst Papers

Make a paper for the nicest kind of people—for the great middle class.

Don't print a lot of dull stuff that they are supposed to like and don't.

Omit things that will offend nice people. Avoid coarseness and slang, and a low tone. The most sensational news can be told if it is written properly.

Talk as a gentleman should. Be reliable in all things, as well as entertaining and amiable.

When a wrong picture is brought in by a reporter, or a wrong picture is used, through lack of care or neglect; or when grossly inaccurate statements are made by a reporter, or copyreader, such copy reader or reporter will be asked to hand in his immediate resignation.

Do not exaggerate. Care must be taken to state accurately the truth. If an eight hundred thousand dollar transaction is described, do not call it a million dollar transaction. If someone dies leaving two million, do not say he left ten million.

Make the paper helpful and kindly. Don't scold and forever complain and attack in your news columns. Leave that to the editorial page.

Be fair and impartial. Don't make a paper for Democrats or Republicans, or Independent Leaguers. Make a paper for all the people and give unbiased news of all creeds and parties. Try to do this in such a conspicuous manner that it will be noticed and commented upon.

Please be accurate. Compare the statements in your paper with those in other papers, and find out which is correct. Discharge reporters and copyreaders who are persistently inaccurate.

Don't allow exaggeration. It is a cheap and ineffective substitute for real interest. Reward reporters who can make the truth interesting, and weed out those who cannot.

Please sum up your paper every day, at the evening conference, and find wherein it is distinctly better than other papers. If it is not distinctly better you have missed that day. Lay your plans to make it distinctly better the next day.

If you cannot show conclusively your own paper's superiority you may be sure the public will never discover it.

A succession of superior papers will surely tell. When you beat your rivals one day try hard to beat them the next, for success depends upon a complete victory.

Guiding Principles for the Dayton *Journal*

This newspaper must first of all be clean, it must be fair, it must be honest and without malice in its opinions and expressions, and it must at all times devote itself unflinchingly and fearlessly to the public service in the interest of the masses of the people.

It must always combat evil and injustice.

It must always fight for progress and reform.

It must never tolerate corruption.

It must be in sympathy with the poor and the unfortunate.

It must stand for good government, civic patriotism, and the public welfare.

For Dayton it must always stand, with unselfish devotion, for the

achievement of the first ideals, of every high purpose, of every enterprise, of every step in the march of progress.

In National affairs: the truest patriotism, and the American principles of freedom, equality, tolerance, and undying love of country.

The New York *Globe's* Ideals

A complete, accurate, dependable newspaper.

A fearless and independent newspaper.

An interesting newspaper.

An uncontrolled newspaper.

A newspaper ever seeking improvement.

A newspaper made primarily for those who buy it.

A newspaper with intelligence and with a soul and a heart.

A progressive newspaper.

An optimistic newspaper.

A successful and prosperous newspaper.

The Sacramento *Bee's* Code

The *Bee* demands from all its writers accuracy before anything else. Better lose an item than make a splurge one day and correct it next.

Equally with that, it demands absolute fairness in the treatment of news. Reports must not be colored to please a friend or wrong an enemy.

Don't editorialize in the news columns. An accurate report is its own best editorial.

Don't exaggerate. Every exaggeration hurts immeasurably the cause it pretends to help.

If a mistake is made, it must be corrected. It is as much the duty of a *Bee* writer to work to the rectification of a wrong done by an error in an item as it is first to use every precaution not to allow that error to creep in.

Be extremely careful of the name and reputation of women. Even when dealing with the unfortunate, remember that so long as she commits no crime other than her own sin against chastity, she is entitled at least to pity.

Sneers at race, or religion, or physical deformity, will not be tolerated. "Dago," "Mick," "Sheeny," even "Chink" or "Jap," these are absolutely forbidden. This rule of regard for the feelings of others must be observed in every avenue of news, under any and all conditions.

There is a time for humor and there is a time for seriousness. The *Bee* likes snap and ginger at all times. It will not tolerate flippancy on serious subjects on any occasion.

The furnisher of an item is entitled to a hearing for his side at all times, not championship. If the latter is ever deemed necessary, the editorial department will attend to it.

Interviews given the paper at the paper's request are to be considered immune from sneers or criticism.

In every accusation against a public official or private citizen, make every effort to have the statement of the accused given prominence in the original item.

In the case of charges which are not ex-officio or from a public source, it is better to lose an item than to chance the doing of a wrong.

Consider the *Bee* always as a tribunal that desires to do justice to all: that fears far more to do injustice to the poorest beggar than to clash swords with wealthy injustice.

Code for the Tampa Times

In our determination to make the *Times* a great and good newspaper, let us be animated by a spirit of charity toward the weaknesses and shortcomings of our fellowmen so long as their actions are more injurious to themselves than to the public welfare;

Printing nothing that will injure or reflect upon the reputation of any man or woman without thorough and painstaking investigation of the facts, remembering that it is better to miss a good story than to run the risk of damaging the name and reputation of an innocent person.

Abhorring the gossip monger and the purveyor of neighborhood scandal.

Handling sex crime, and revolting details of all kinds, so as to offend good taste as little as we may, in the knowledge that many of our readers are pure-minded girls and women, and that an intentional appeal to the salacious is indecent journalism.

Refusing to create sensations out of trivialities, or allow motives of any kind to inspire overplaying of the news.

Vowing solemnly to ourselves that ours shall be an honest and truthful newspaper in which shall be printed nothing but well established facts, emphasizing constantly that guessing is unpardonable and the printing of irresponsible rumors a journalistic crime.

In all of which meriting, as individuals, the respect of our associates and the public by fairness to our enemies, cleanness in our purposes and unswerving honesty every minute of every hour.

As the character of an individual is built by his thoughts and actions, so is the character of a newspaper built up by the printed word.

The good name of the *Times* must be kept above reproach.

The Late President Harding's Creed for the Marion *Star*

Remember there are two sides to every question. Get them both.
Be truthful. Get the facts.

Mistakes are inevitable, but strive for accuracy. I would rather have one story exactly right than a hundred half wrong.

Be decent, be fair, be generous.

Boost—don't knock.

There is good in everybody. Bring out the good and never needlessly hurt the feelings of anybody.

In reporting a political gathering, give the facts, tell the story as it is, not as you would like to have it. Treat all parties alike. If there are politics to be played, we will play them in our editorial columns.

Treat all religious matters reverently.

If it can possibly be avoided, never bring ignominy on an innocent man or child, in telling of the misdeeds or misfortunes of a relative.

Don't wait to be asked, but do it without the asking; and, above all, be clean and never let a dirty word or suggestive story get into type.

I want this paper to be so conducted that it can go into any home without destroying the innocence of any child.

Charles A. Dana's Creed

Statements made in an address to the Wisconsin Editorial Association, 1888:

There is no system of maxims or professional rules that I know of that is laid down for the guidance of the journalist. The physician has his system of ethics and that sublime oath of Hippocrates which human wisdom has never transcended. The lawyer also has his code of ethics, and the rules of the courts, and the rules of practice which he is instructed in; but I have never met with a system of maxims that seemed to me to be perfectly adapted to the general direction of a newspaper man. I have written down a few principles which occurred to me. These, with your permission, gentlemen, I will read for the benefit of the young newspaper men here to-night:

Get the news, get all the news, get nothing but the news.

Copy nothing from another publication without perfect credit.

Never print an interview without the knowledge and consent of the party interviewed.

Never print a paid advertisement as news matter. Let every advertisement appear as advertisement; no sailing under false colors.

Never attack the weak or defenseless, either by argument, by in-

vective, or by ridicule, unless there is some absolute public necessity for so doing.

Fight for your opinions, but do not believe that they contain the whole truth, or the only truth.

Support your party if you have one, but do not think all the good men are in it, and all the bad ones outside of it.

Above all, know and believe that humanity is advancing, that there is progress in human life and human affairs, and that, as sure as God lives, the future will be greater and better than the present and the past.

Mr. Dana, at Cornell University, 1894, said:

Never be in a hurry.

Hold fast to the Constitution. Stand by the Stars and Stripes. Above all, stand for liberty, whatever happens.

A word that is not spoken never does any mischief.

All the goodness of a good egg cannot make up for the badness of a bad one.

If you find you have been wrong, don't fear to say so.

In other words, don't loaf, don't cheat, don't dissemble, don't bully, don't be narrow.

The Journalist's Creed

By Walter Williams

I believe in the profession of journalism.

I believe that the public journal is a public trust; that all connected with it are, to the full measure of their responsibility, trustees for the public; that acceptance of lesser service than the public service is betrayal of this trust.

I believe that clear thinking, and clear statement, accuracy, and fairness are fundamental to good journalism.

I believe that a journalist should write only what he holds in his heart to be true.

I believe that suppression of the news for any consideration other than the welfare of society is indefensible.

I believe that no one should write as a journalist what he would not say as a gentleman; that bribery by one's own pocketbook is as much to be avoided as bribery by the pocketbook of another; that individual responsibility may not be escaped by pleading another's instruction or another's dividends.

I believe that advertising, news, and editorial columns should alike serve the best interests of the readers; that a single standard of helpful truth and clearness should prevail for all; that the supreme test of journalism is the measure of its public service.

I believe that the journalism which succeeds best—and best deserves success—fears God and honors man; is stoutly independent, unmoved by pride of opinion, or greed of power; constructive, tolerant, but never careless; self-controlled, patient, always respectful of its readers, always unafraid; is quickly indignant at injustice; is unswayed by the appeal of privilege, or the clamor of the mob; seeks to give every man a chance, and, as far as law and honest wages and recognition of human brotherhood can make it so, an equal chance; is profoundly patriotic, while sincerely promoting international good will, and cementing world comradeship; is a journalism of humanity, of and for to-day's world.

E. W. Booth's Suggestions for a Code

At a meeting of the code committee of the Michigan Press Club, Edmund W. Booth, editor and publisher of the *Grand Rapids Press*, presented a "preamble" and "ten dangers and difficulties to be considered in the formulation of a Code of Ethics for newspapers."

Preamble

The daily newspaper in America, being the publication most generally read by all classes of people and being by common consent a public servant, having abilities for promoting the interests of government and of the public welfare, it therefore becomes a matter of honor and of duty that editors and reporters, as well as publishers, shall strive at all times for the freedom of the press, themselves kept free from all interests or alliances tending to hamper free expression, shall seek for truth and accuracy in all published statements and shall contend for fairness and for justice toward all individuals, interests, or issues dealt with in the newspaper columns.

The Dangers and Difficulties to Be Met by a Code of Ethics:

1. Coloring news to fit some interest or party.
2. Filling space and warping public opinion with canned propaganda.
3. Reporters or editors having a divided interest by receiving pay for outside services, or acting as press agents.
4. Holding of corporation stock—banks or utilities.
5. Editorial opinion controlled by advertisers or sold for a price.
6. Promoting crime by powerful suggestion in news.
7. Harming public morals by printing details of divorces and scandals.

8. Treating serious subjects flippantly. The tendency to become a newspaper cynic.

9. Suppression of news that the interests of the public call for printing.

10. The passion to win in a controversy leading to working injustices on opponents.

A Code by the Public

While the public has not withheld criticism of the newspapers, it has seldom attempted to construct a program for betterment. Such a constructive effort was made some years ago by the Citizens' Protective League of Denver, and the following proposed rules were inserted in the form of an advertisement in Denver newspapers:

1. That no news story, editorial, or advertisement be published which is unfit for a fifteen-year-old boy or girl to read.

2. That fake stories, misrepresentations, and exaggerations of all kinds be eliminated.

3. That stories of divorce, murder, suicide, and other forms of crime and immorality be kept in the background.

4. That the petty quarrels and constant warfare between the newspapers be permanently discontinued.

5. That stories which, though having some basis of fact, might be hurtful to Colorado or to any city in Colorado, should not be exploited in a sensational manner.

6. That malicious or unwarranted statements injurious to Colorado, or to any legitimate industry of Colorado be barred from publication.

INDEX

- Abbot, Lyman, 128
- Accuracy, 12, 299
 - group judgments as to, 32
 - in the headings, 29
 - individual expressions on, 30
 - means of promoting, 32
 - obstacles to, 16, 299
- Accuracy and Fair Play, Bureau of, 32
- Advertisers,
 - clubbing, 250
 - coöperation with, 249
 - protecting, 248
- Advertising, 244
 - excluding offensive, 244
 - guaranteed, 2, 6
 - quantity of, 247
 - rates, fair, 250
 - refusing dishonest, 245, 307
- Advertising influence, the, 116-123
- Advice, giving, 304
- Allen, Eric W., 141, 287
 - Henry J., 276
- American Daily Standard*, 420
- American Mercury*, 308, 387
- Anderson, Maxwell, 136
- Anti-feminism, 292
- Anti-social news, 187-243
- Armistice, news of the, 26
- Armour, Ogden, 62
- Associated Press, 25, 45
- Atlantic Monthly*, 121, 164, 307
- Audit Bureau of Circulations, 307
- Authority, phantom, 59
- Barrett, J. W., 266
- Beacon*, Wichita, 276
- Beecher, Henry Ward, 326
- Bee*, Sacramento, 456
- Bellamy, Paul, 407
- Bennett, James Gordon, 296
- Bias of the reporter, 18
- Blacklisting, 166
- Bliven, Bruce, 307
- Bohemianism, 286
- Booth, Edmund W., 460
- Boston News Letter*, 283
- Post*, 360
- Bowles, Samuel, 303
- Brant, Irving, 145, 378
- Brisbane, Arthur, 143
- Bromley Morning News*, 424
- Brooklyn Eagle*, 447
- Brooks, Noah, 426
- Brownell, Atherton, 147
- Brown, James Wright, 135
 - Rome G., 108, 399, 400
- Bryce, James, 277, 347
- Burlington Republican*, 30
- Business-ethical problems, 244-254, 306
- Campbell, John, 283
- Canons of journalism, 427
- Capitalism, anti-, 140
- Capitalistic press, the, 135
 - tests for, 137
- Carelessness, 16
- Censorship, honor-bound, 111
- Century Magazine*, 26

- Charity, funds for, 358
 Chesterton, Gilbert K., 129
 Chicago *Tribune*, 169, 304, 313,
 324, 342, 366
 Christian Science Monitor, 413,
 448
 Chronicle, San Francisco, 357
 Cincinnati *Enquirer*, 324
 Circulation, 251
 honest statements of, 252
 known, 307
 Cleveland *Plain Dealer*, 407
 Press, 364
 Cobb, Frank I., 149, 171
 Code of ethics, 427
 Booth, E. W., 460
 Brooklyn *Eagle*, 447
 Christian Science Monitor,
 448
 Citizens' Protective League,
 461
 Dana, Charles A., 458
 Dayton *Journal*, 455
 Detroit *News*, 451
 Hearst papers, 454
 Kansas Editorial Association,
 429
 Marion *Star*, 458
 Missouri State Press Asso-
 ciation, 440
 National Association of News-
 paper Editors, 427
 New York *Globe*, 456
 Oregon State Editorial Asso-
 ciation, 435
 Philadelphia *Public Ledger*,
 446
 Sacramento *Bee*, 456
 South Dakota Press Associa-
 tion, 443
 South Florida Press Associa-
 tion, 442
 Springfield *Republican*, 450
 Tampa *Times*, 457
 Texas Press Association, 442
- Code of Ethics (*Continued*)
 Washington State Press As-
 sociation, 445
 Williams, Walter, 459
 Codes in journalism, 281
 influence of, 385-394
 opposition to, 387
 Collier's, 42, 307
 "Coloring" news, 57, 293
 editors' views on, 66
 group judgments as to, 69
 heads, the, 60
 interpretative, 64
 Columbia *State*, 312
 Combateness, 289
 Commercialism, 302
 Commercial News, Danville, 269
 Community service, 355-373
 beauty, 363
 credit for, 373
 education, 362
 health conditions, 363
 pride, 366
 safety, 363
 unification, 364
 Correction of errors, 175-186
 editors' views as to, 176
 public opinion as to, 177
 under standing head, 184
 what is "adequate," 181
 Courage, 301
 Courier-Journal, Louisville, 113,
 385, 409
 Courts, independence of, 108
 Creel, George, 351
 Crime news, 187-243
 better practice as to, 241
 brutalizing effect of, 205
 conservative policy, 192
 emphasizing penalties, 216
 group judgments as to, 235
 opinions regarding, 231
 outside opinions as to, 236
 quantity of, 237

Crime News (*Continued*)

- radical policy of handling, 188
- statistics of, 231
- Criminal, helping convict the, 224
- Criticisms of the press, 3-11, 14
 - attitude toward, 3
 - main currents of, 5
 - sources of, 4
- Crowell, Chester T., 308
- Crusading, 165, 335

Daily Capital, Topeka, 420

Daily Mail, London, 247

Dana, Charles A., 312, 458

Darrow, Clarence, 224

Dayton Journal, 455

Detective, newspaper as, 221

Detroit News, 127, 129, 370, 425, 451

Times, 421

Diary, Marryatt's, 289

Duffus, Robert L., 132

Dunlop, George H., 419

Dyment, Colin, 386, 435

Eagle, Brooklyn, 447

Edgecombe, Frank O., 373

Editor and Publisher, 41, 134, 224, 232, 247, 333

Editorial, articles properly, 63

Emporia Gazette, 97

Endowed newspapers, 420

English journalism,

faking in, 42

freedom of, 102

spread in, 27

Enquirer, Cincinnati, 324

Entertainment element, 298

Error, degrees of, 182

Errors, as a result of speed, 22
correcting, 175-186

Errors (*Continued*)

- opportunities for, 15
- through informants, 20
- Essary, J. F., 147
- Ethics, not theoretical, 411
- training in, 409
- Evening Journal*, New York, 143
- Evening Post*, New York, 242, 304, 358
- Everybody's Magazine*, 351

Fact, guessing at the, 25
in the news, 12-37

Facts, truth back of, 191

Fairness, as to advertising, 159
as to communications, 152
in correcting errors, 175
to competitors, 174
to the "opposition," 156
towards officials, 168

Faker, the newspaper, 46

Fakes, advance story, 42
newspaper, 37-49

Faking, newspaper, 37-49, 295
by the rewrite man, 45
near, 43
not confined to cities, 38
pictures, 43
press agent, 40
styles in, 38
to advance a policy, 42

Ferguson, Fred S., 111

Fitch, George, 125, 128

Fort Worth *Star-Telegram*, 265
Forum, 426

Fourth Estate, 153, 234

Franklin, Fabian, 124

Freedom of the press in America, 103, 301

Freedom, the meaning of, 102

Galsworthy, John, 378

- Gazette*, Emporia, 97
Geneva Signal, 373
 George, David Lloyd, 169
 Gerdes, John, 106
 Ghent, W. J., 140
 Gibbs, Philip, 348
 Giving the public what it wants, 123-132, 293
 Gladden, Washington, 56, 178, 236
Globe-Democrat, St. Louis, 385
Globe, New York, 361, 427, 456
 Godkin, E. L., 304, 374
 Gossip, 172
 Grand Rapids *Press*, 460
 Grasty, Charles H., 121, 164, 178
 Greeley, Horace, 297, 304, 355
- Harding, Warren G., 9, 458
 Harrison, J. H., 269
 Harvey, George, 424
 Haskell, H. J., 49
 Heads, accuracy in the, 29
 Health, guarding community, 362
 Hearst papers' code, 454
 Hendrick, Burton J., 376
Herald, New York, 296, 358
 Holmes, O. W., 109
 Holt, Hamilton, 126, 420
 Homes, wrecked, stories of, 213
 Hornblow, Jr., Arthur, 26
 House, Jay, 131
 Howard, Roy, 65
 Hughes, Charles E., 375
 Humanitarianism, 305
- Ideal newspapers, 420
 Ignorance of the reporter, 19
 Impartiality, fairness and, 152-187
- Independence, 101-151
 danger in, 115
 in times of national peril, 110
 meaning of, 101
 of advertisers, 116
 of commercialism, 132
 of courts, 108
 of factions, 115
 of friends and enemies, 150
 of political parties, 112
 of propaganda, 141
 of the public, 123
Independent, 126
 Individuality, newspaper, 311-321
 Industrial benefits, 359, 361
 Infallibility, 300
 Influence, newspaper, 326-354
 avenues of, 346
 direct, 327
 in cities and in small towns, 350
 indirect, 327
 measurements of, 344
 on taste, 349
 sources of, 336
 Informants, deception by, 22
 errors by, 20
 International relations, the press and, 374
 Irwin, Will, 42, 149, 307
- Jefferson, Thomas, 104, 171
 Jessup, Henry W., 402
 Johns, George S., 343
Journal, Dayton, 455
 Kansas City, 323
 Milwaukee, 370, 372
 Oregon, 114
 Providence, 323, 372
 Journalism, as a career, 415
 as a profession, 271
 beginnings of, 263

- Journalism (*Continued*)
 nature and functions of, 257-282
 personal, 292
 prejudices against the word, 262
 professional training in, 407
- Kansas City *Journal*, 323
Kansan, 325
Star, 49, 226, 320
- Keeley, James, 15
- Lait, Jack, 372
- Lansing, Robert, 179
- Lawson, E. F., 377
- Law, the press and the, 379
- Lee, Ivy L., 143
 James Melvin, 66
- Legal restrictions, 395-406
 minor efforts at, 403
 objections to, 395
- Lehmann, Frederick W., 107
- Libel, law of, 105
- Liberty of the press, meaning of, 105
- Licensing journalists, 280
 difficulties of, 401
 need for, 400
 plans for, 396
- Lincoln, Abraham, 354
- Linthicum, Richard, 34
- Lippman, Walter, 147, 421
- London *Daily Mail*, 247
Times, 26, 152
- Lord, Chester S., 330, 346, 350, 354
- Los Angeles *Municipal News*, 419
- Louisville *Courier-Journal*, 113, 385, 409
- Marion *Star*, 458
- Martin, Frederick Roy, 45
- McCormick, Robert R., 169
- Measurements of excellence, 426
- Mencken, H. L., 388
- Mental health board, 240
- Miller, Charles G., 150
 R. Justin, 401
 W. E., 429
- Milwaukee *Journal*, 370, 372
- Montague, C. E., 352
- Municipal News*, 419
- Nation*, 298
- Nelson, William R., 356
- News*, Birmingham, 357
- News, demand for unadulterated, 60
 distortion of, by selection and emphasis, 51-55
 official authentication of, 421
 opinion in the, 59
 suppression of, 71-100
- News*, Detroit, 127, 129, 370, 425, 451
- News Letter*, Boston, 283
- Newspaper, the, appearance of, 314
 as a public utility, 264
 foreign types of, 322
 individuality of, 311-321
 influence of, 326-354
 intellectuality of, 315
 moral character of, 321
 tone of, 319
- Newspapers, endowed, 420
 ideal, 420
 official, 419
- News sources, responsibility of, 405
- New York *Evening Journal*, 143
- New York *Evening Post*, 242, 304, 358
- New York *Globe*, 361, 427, 456
- New York *Herald*, 296, 358

New York *Sun*, 37, 330
 New York *Times*, 270, 313, 359,
 372, 378
 New York *Tribune*, 246, 297,
 304, 355, 358
 Northcliffe press, the, 381
 Noyes, Crosby S., 190

Ochs, Adolph S., 270, 313
 Office holding, 294
 Official paper, the, 419
 O'Hara, Barrat, 396
 O'Malley, Frank W., 27
 Opinion, expressing, 297
 in the news, 59
 Oregon *Journal*, 114
 Organizations in journalism,
 423
Outlook, 36, 128

Partisanship, 292
 Party organ, the, 113
 Perquisites, 290
 Personal journalism, 292
 Philadelphia *Public Ledger*, 446
 Pittsburgh *Post*, 370
 Plain Dealer, Cleveland, 407
 Player, Cyril Arthur, 127
 Policies, newspaper, 322
Post, Boston, 360
 Pittsburgh, 370
Post Dispatch, St. Louis, 322,
 343, 358
 Postlewhite, Harmon, 422
 Press agents, 144
 Press, capitalistic, the, 135
 foreign language, 353
 freedom of the, 102, 103, 105
Press, Cleveland, 364
 Grand Rapids, 460
 Press Gang, the, 289
 Press, the, and social unity, 379
 and the law, 379

Professional conduct, 98
 Professional training, 407-413
 Profession, attributes of a, 271
 consciousness of, 301
 journalism as a, 271-277
 requirements in a, 279
 Propaganda, 141, 305
 declarations regarding, 148
 distinguished from publicity,
 142
 since the war, 142
 stemming the tide of, 148
Providence Journal, 323, 372
 Provincialism, 294
 Public demand for unadulterated
 news, 60
 c, demands by the, 418
 giving the, what it wants, 123,
 132
 Publicity as punishment, 215
Public Occurrences, 37
Public Ledger, Philadelphia, 446
 Public opinion regarding news-
 papers, 14
 Public sentiment, reflecting, 297
 Public utility, newspaper as,
 264-270
 danger in idea of, 270
 Publishing business, the, 260
 statistics of, 261
 Pulitzer awards, 357, 370, 372
 Pulitzer, Joseph, 31, 33, 305,
 322, 356
 Pulitzer, Ralph, 15, 46

Quill, 132

Radder, Norman J., 364
 Radio by newspapers, 371
 Readers, good will of, 340
 receptivity of, 342
 winning confidence of, 338
 Redmond, John, 30

Reform, initiating, 303
 Reporter, the, bias of, 18
 ignorance of, 19
 salary of, 253
Republican, Burlington, 30
 Springfield, 266, 303, 366, 450
Republic, St. Louis, 107
 Responsibilities, broader, 374
 general, 380
 Riis, Roger W., 318
 Robertson, Harrison, 113, 409
 Rogers, Jason, 134, 253, 263
 Romantic, glamor of the, 201
 Ross, E. A., 136, 137
 Rules, intra-professional, 1

Sacramento *Bee*, 456
 St. Louis *Globe Democrat*, 385
 Post Dispatch, 322, 343, 358
 Republic, 107
 Star, 23, 35
 Salaries of reporters, 253
 San Francisco *Chronicle*, 357
Saturday Evening Post, 27, 68, 190, 348
 Schermerhorn, James, 345, 421
 Schott, Henry, 291
 Scott, F. N., 179, 425
 Services for the community, 355-373
 Shaw, G. B., 380
 Sheldon, Charles M., 420
Signal, Geneva, 373
 Sinclair, Upton, 61, 121
 Slosson, E. E., 19, 424
 Smith, Munroe, 178
 Southern, Jr., William, 440
 Speed, 22, 299
 in English journalism, 27
 Springfield *Republican*, 266, 303, 366, 450
Star, Kansas City, 49, 226, 320
 Marion, 458

Star (*Continued*)
 St. Louis, 23, 35
Star-Telegram, Fort Worth, 265
State, Columbia, 312
 Stokes, Harold Phelps, 377
 Suicides, news of, 209
Sun, New York, 37, 330
 Suppression of news or opinion, 71-100
 arguments against, 78
 arguments for, 77
 divergent theories as to, 73
 exaggerated notions regarding, 72
 group judgments as to, 98
 Swayze, Bob, 114
 Swope, Herbert Bayard, 154

Tampa *Times*, 457
 Taylor, Frank W., 36
 Ten tests of a town, 367
Times, Detroit, 421
 London, 26, 152
 New York, 270, 313, 359, 372, 378
 Tampa, 457
 Topeka *Daily Capital*, 420
 Traditions of journalism, 283-310
 active, 296
 classification of, 286
 historic, 309
 literary, 309
 obsolescent, 292
 obsolete, 286
 political, 309
Tribune, Chicago, 169, 304, 313, 324, 342, 366
 New York, 246, 297, 304, 355, 358
 Truth, and its enemies, 50-70
 back of the facts, 191
 the fundamental virtue, 36

- United Press Associations, 65
- Venality, 294
- Villard, Oswald Garrison, 342
- Virtues in journalism, major, 6
- Vocational requirements, 309
- Walston, Charles, 419
- Warren, Waldo P., 425
- War services by the press, 371
- Wars, newspaper, 290
- Watterson, Henry, 150, 385
- White, Isaac D., 12
 Lee A, 15, 129
 William Allen, 87, 118, 401
- Wichita *Beacon*, 276
- Wiley, Louis, 378
- Williams, Walter, 459
- Wilson, James H., 355
 Woodrow, 111, 376
- World*, New York, 12, 15, 32,
 154, 305, 356, 371
- World's Work*, 169
- Wright, H. J., 427
- Yellow Journalism, 295
- Yost, Casper S., 385, 414
- Zenger, John Peter, 104





